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THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE

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1908

THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE ROMANS

BY
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NORRISIAN PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY AT CAMBRIDGE

FIFTH EDIDION

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To

THE REV. ROBERT SINKER, D.D.,

LIBRARIAN OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

MY FRIEND OF THIRTY-TWO YEARS,

TO WHOSE KINDNESS AND KNOWLEDGE

I AM DEEPLY AND INCREASINGLY INDEBTED,

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY

INSCRIBED.

H. C. G. M.

Hearing read, as I do continually, the Epistles of the blessed Paul . . . I delight in the enjoyment of his spiritual trumpet, and my heart leaps up, and my longings set me glowing, as I recognize the voice so dear to me, and seem to image the speaker all but present to me, and to see him in discourse. But I mourn and am distressed, because all do not know this man as they should know him. . . . It is from hence our myriad evils spring —from our ignorance of the Scriptures. Hence grows this epidemic of our heresies; hence our neglected lives, hence our unfruitful toil.

St Chrysostom, *Preamble to Homilies on the Epistle to the Romans.*

PREFACE

HE who attempts to expound the Epistle to the Romans, when his sacred task is over, is little disposed to speak about his Commentary; he is occupied rather with an ever deeper reverence and wonder over the Text which he has been permitted to handle, a Text so full of a marvellous man, above all so full of GOD.

But it seems needful to say a few words about the style of the running Translation of the Epistle which will be found interwoven with this Exposition.

The writer is aware that the translation is often rough and formless. His apology is that it has been done with a view not to a connected reading but to the explanation of details. A rough piece of rendering, which would be a misrepresentation in a continuous version, because it would be out of scale with the general style, seems to be another matter when it only calls the reader's attention to a particular point presented for study at the moment.

Again, he is aware that his rendering of the

Greek article in many passages (for example, where he has ventured to explain it by "*our*," "*true*," etc.) is open to criticism. But he intends no more in such places than a suggestion; and he is conscious, as he has said sometimes at the place, that it is almost impossible to render the article as he has done in these cases without a certain exaggeration, which must be discounted by the reader.

The use of the article in Greek is one of the simplest and most assured things in grammar, as to its main principles. But as regards some details of the application of principle, there is nothing in grammar which seems so easily to elude the line of law.

It is scarcely necessary to say that on questions of literary criticism which in no respect, or at most remotely, concern exposition, this Commentary says little or nothing. It is well known to literary students of the Epistle that some phenomena in the text, from the close of ch. xiv. onwards, have raised important and complex questions. It has been asked whether the great Doxology (xvi. 25-27) always stood where it now stands; whether it should stand at the close of our ch. xiv.; whether its style and wording allow us to regard it as contemporary with the Epistle as a whole, or whether they indicate that it was written later in St Paul's course; whether our fifteenth and

sixteenth chapters, while Pauline, are not out of place in an Epistle to Rome; in particular, whether the list of names in ch. xvi. is compatible with a Roman destination.

These questions, with one exception, that which affects the list of names, are not even touched upon in the present Exposition. The expositor, personally convinced that the pages we know as the Epistle to the Romans are not only all genuine but all intimately coherent, has not felt himself called to discuss, in a devotional writing, subjects more proper to the lecture-room and the study; and which certainly would be out of place in the ministry of the pulpit.

Meantime, those who care to read a masterly *debate* on the literary problems in question may consult the recently published volume (1893), *Biblical Studies*, by the late Bishop Lightfoot, of Durham. That volume contains (pp. 287-374) three critical Essays (1869, 1871), two by Bishop Lightfoot, one by the late Dr Hort, on *The Structure and Destination of the Epistle to the Romans*. The two illustrious friends,—Hort criticizing Lightfoot, Lightfoot replying to Hort,—examine the phenomena of Rom. xv.-xvi. Lightfoot advocates the theory that St Paul, some time after writing the Epistle, issued an abridged edition for wider circulation, omitting the direction to Rome, closing the document with our ch. xiv., and then (not before) writing, as a

finale, the great Doxology. Hort holds to the practical entirety of the Epistle as we have it, and reasons at length for the contemporaneousness of xvi. 25-27 with the rest.*

We may note here that both Hort and Lightfoot contend for *the conciliatory* aim of the Roman Epistle. They regard the great passage about Israel (ix.-xi.) as in some sense the heart of the Epistle, and the doctrinal passages preceding this as all more or less meant to bear on the relations not only of the Law and the Gospel, but of the Jew and the Gentile as members of the one Christian Church. There is great value in this suggestion, explained and illustrated as it is in the Essays in question. But the thought may easily be worked to excess. It seems plain to the present writer that when the Epistle is studied from within its deepest spiritual element, it shews us the Apostle fully mindful of the largest aspects of the life and work of the Church, but also, and yet more, occupied with the problem of the relation of the believing sinner to God. The question of personal salvation was never, by St Paul, forgotten in that of Christian policy.

To return for a moment to this Exposition, or rather to its setting; it may be doubted whether, in imagining the dictation of the Epistle to be begun and completed

* See also Westcott and Hort's *N.T. in the Original Greek*, vol. 2, Appendix, pp. 110-114 (ed. 1).

by St Paul *within one day* we have not imagined "a hard thing." But at worst it is not an impossible thing, if the Apostle's utterance was as sustained as his thought.

It remains only to express the hope that these pages may serve in some degree to convey to their readers a new *Tolle, Lege* for the divine Text itself; if only by suggesting to them sometimes the words of St Augustine, "*To Paul I appeal from all interpreters of his writings.*"

RIDLEY HALL, CAMBRIDGE,
ALL SAINTS' DAY, 1893.

FORASMUCH as this Epistle is . . . a light and way unto the whole Scripture, I think it meet that every Christian man not only know it, by rote and without the book, but also exercise himself therein evermore continually, as with the daily bread of the soul. No man verily can read it too oft, or study it too well; for the more it is studied, the easier it is; the more it is chewed, the pleasanter it is; and the more groundly it is searched, the preciouser things are found in it, so great treasure of spiritual things lieth hid therein.

W. TYNDALE, after LUTHER.

TOWARDS the close of one of my nights of suffering, at half-past four, I asked my kind watcher . . . to read me a chapter of the Word of God. He proposed the eighth of the Epistle to the Romans. I assented, but with the request that, to secure the connexion of ideas, he would go back to the sixth, and even to the fifth. We read in succession the four chapters, v., vi., vii., viii., and I thought no more of sleep. . . . Then we read the ninth, and the remaining passages, to the end, with an interest always equal and sustained; and then the first four, that nothing might be lost. About two hours had passed. . . . I cannot tell you how I was struck, in thus reading the Epistle as a whole, with the seal of divinity, of truth, of holiness, of love, and of power, which is impressed on every page, on every word. We felt, my young friend and I, . . . that we were listening to a voice from heaven.

A. MONOD, *Adieux*, § V., *Quelques Mots sur la Lecture de la Bible*.

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CHAPTER I

TIME, PLACE, AND OCCASION

IT is the month of February, in the year of Christ 58.* In a room in the house of Gaius, a wealthy Corinthian Christian, Paul the Apostle, having at his side his amanuensis Tertius, addresses himself to write to the converts of the mission at Rome.

The great world meanwhile is rolling on its way. It is the fourth year of Nero; he is Consul the third time, with Valerius Messala for his colleague; Poppæa has lately caught the unworthy Prince in the net of her bad influence. Domitius Corbulo has just resumed the war with Parthia, and prepares to penetrate the highlands of Armenia. Within a few weeks, in the full spring, an Egyptian impostor is about to inflame Jerusalem with his Messianic claim, to lead four thousand fanatics into the desert, and to return to the city with a host of thirty thousand men, only to be totally routed by the legionaries of Felix. For himself, the Apostle is about to close his three months' stay at Corinth; he has heard of plots against his life, and will in prudence decline the more direct route from Cenchrea by sea, striking northward for Philippi, and thence over the Ægæan to Troas. Jerusalem he must visit, if possible before May is over, for he has by him the Greek

* See Lewin, *Fasti Sacri*, § 1854, etc.

collections to deliver to the poor converts of Jerusalem. Then, in the vista of his further movements, he sees Rome, and thinks with a certain apprehension yet with longing hope about life and witness there.

A Greek Christian woman is about to visit the City, Phœbe, a ministrant of the mission at Cenchrea. He must commend her to the Roman brethren; and a deliberate Letter to them is suggested by this personal need.

His thoughts have long gravitated to the City of the World. Not many months before, at Ephesus, when he had "purposed in the Spirit" to visit Jerusalem, he had said, with an emphasis which his biographer remembered, "I must also see Rome" (Acts xix. 21); "*I must*," in the sense of a divine decree, which had written this journey down in the plan of his life. He was assured too, by circumstantial and perhaps by supernatural signs, that he had "now no more place in these parts" (Rom. xv. 23)—that is, in the Eastern Roman world where hitherto all his labour had been spent. The Lord who in former days had shut Paul up to a track which led him through Asia Minor to the Ægæan, and across the Ægæan to Europe (Acts xvi.), now prepared to guide him, though by paths which His servant knew not, from Eastern Europe to Western, and before all things to the City. Amongst these providential preparations was a growing occupation of the Apostle's thought with persons and interests in the Christian circle there. Here, as we have seen, was Phœbe, about to take ship for Italy. Yonder, in the great Capital, were now resident again the beloved and faithful Aquila and Prisca, no longer excluded by the Claudian edict, and proving already, we may fairly conclude, the central influence in the mission, whose first days perhaps dated from the Pentecost itself, when

Roman "strangers" (Acts ii. 10) saw and heard the wonders and the message of that hour. At Rome also lived other believers personally known to Paul, drawn by unrecorded circumstances to the Centre of the world. "His well-beloved" Epænetus was there; Mary, who had sometimes tried hard to help him; Andronicus, and Junias, and Herodion, his relatives; Amplias and Stachys, men very dear to him; Urbanus, who had worked for Christ at his side; Rufus, no common Christian in his esteem, and Rufus' mother, who had once watched over Paul with a mother's love. All these rise before him as he thinks of Phœbe, and her arrival, and the faces and the hands which at his appeal would welcome her in the Lord, under the holy freemasonry of primeval Christian fellowship.

Besides, he has been hearing about the actual state of that all-important mission. As "all roads led to Rome," so all roads led from Rome, and there were Christian travellers everywhere (i. 8) who could tell him how the Gospel fared among the metropolitan brethren. As he heard of them, so he prayed for them, "without ceasing" (i. 9), and made request too for himself, now definitely and urgently, that his way might be opened to visit them at last.

To pray for others, if the prayer is prayer indeed, and based to some extent on knowledge, is a sure way to deepen our interest in them, and our sympathetic insight into their hearts and conditions. From the human side, nothing more than these tidings and these prayers was needed to draw from St Paul a written message to be placed in Phœbe's care. From this same human side again, when he once addressed himself to write, there were circumstances of thought and action which would naturally give direction to his message.

He stood amidst circumstances most significant and suggestive in matters of Christian *truth*. Quite recently his Judaist rivals had invaded the congregations of Galatia, and had led the impulsive converts there to quit what seemed their firm grasp on the truth of Justification by Faith only. To St Paul this was no mere battle of abstract definitions, nor again was it a matter of merely local importance. The success of the alien teachers in Galatia shewed him that the same specious mischiefs might win their way, more or less quickly, anywhere. And what would such success mean? It would mean the loss of the joy of the Lord, and the strength of that joy, in the misguided Churches. Justification by Faith meant nothing less than *Christ all in all*, literally all in all, for sinful man's pardon and acceptance. It meant a profound simplicity of personal reliance altogether upon Him before the fiery holiness of eternal Law. It meant a look out and up, at once intense and unanxious, from alike the virtues and the guilt of man, to the mighty merits of the Saviour. It was precisely the foundation-fact of salvation, which secured that the process should be, from its beginning, not humanitarian but divine. To discredit *that* was not merely to disturb the order of a missionary community; it was to hurt the vitals of the Christian soul, tinging with impure elements the mountain springs of the peace of God. Fresh as he was now from combating this evil in Galatia, St Paul would be sure to have it in his thoughts when he turned to Rome; for there it was only too certain that his active adversaries would do their worst; probably they were at work already.

Then, he had been just engaged also with the problems of Christian *life*, in the mission at Corinth.

There the main trouble was less of creed than of conduct. In the Corinthian Epistles we find no great traces of an energetic heretical propaganda, but rather a bias in the converts towards a strange licence of temper and life. Perhaps this was even accentuated by a popular logical assent to the truth of Justification *taken alone*, isolated from other concurrent truths, tempting the Corinthian to dream that he might "continue in sin that grace might abound." If such were his state of spiritual thought, he would encounter (by his own fault) a positive moral danger in the supernatural "Gifts" which at Corinth about that time seem to have appeared with quite abnormal power. An antinomian theory, in the presence of such exaltations, would lead the man easily to the conception that he was too free and too rich in the supernatural order to be the servant of common duties, and even of common morals. Thus the Apostle's soul would be full of the need of expounding to its depths the vital harmony of the Lord's work *for* the believer and the Lord's work *in* him; the co-ordination of a free acceptance with both the precept and the possibility of holiness. He must shew once for all how the justified are bound to be pure and humble, and how they can so be, and what forms of practical dutifulness their life must take. He must make it clear for ever that the Ransom which releases also purchases; that the Lord's freeman is the Lord's property; that the Death of the Cross, reckoned as the death of the justified sinner, leads direct to his living union with the Risen One, including a union of will with will; and that thus the Christian life, if true to itself, *must* be a life of loyalty to every obligation, every relation, constituted in God's providence among men. The Christian who is not attentive

to others, even where their mere prejudices and mistakes are in question, is a Christian out of character. So is the Christian who is not a scrupulously loyal citizen, recognizing civil order as the will of God. So is the Christian who in any respect claims to live as he pleases, instead of as the bondservant of his Redeemer should live.

Another question had been pressing the Apostle's mind, and that for years, but recently with a special weight. It was the mystery of Jewish unbelief. Who can estimate the pain and greatness of that mystery in the mind of St Paul? His own conversion, while it taught him patience with his old associates, must have filled him also with some eager hopes for them. Every deep and self-evidencing manifestation of God in a man's soul suggests to him naturally the thought of the glorious things possible in the souls of others. Why should not the leading Pharisee, now converted, be the signal, and the means, of the conversion of the Sanhedrin, and of the people? But the hard mystery of sin crossed such paths of expectation, and more and more so as the years went on. Judaism outside the Church was stubborn, and energetically hostile. And within the Church, sad and ominous fact, it crept in underground, and sprung up in an embittered opposition to the central truths. What did all this mean? Where would it end? Had Israel sinned, collectively, beyond pardon and repentance? Had God cast off His people? These troublers of Galatia, these fiery rioters before the tribunal of Gallio at Corinth, did their conduct mean that all was over for the race of Abraham? The question was agony to Paul; and he sought his Lord's answer to it as a thing without which he could not live. That answer was full in his soul when he meditated his

Letter to Rome, and thought of the Judaists there, and also of the loving Jewish friends of his heart there who would read his message when it came.

Thus we venture to describe the possible outward and inward conditions under which the Epistle to the Romans was conceived and written. Well do we recollect that our account is conjectural. But the Epistle in its wonderful fulness, both of outline and of detail, gives to such conjectures more than a shadow for basis. We do not forget again that the Epistle, whatever the Writer saw around him or felt within him, was, when produced, infinitely more than the resultant of Paul's mind and life; it was, and is, an oracle of God, a Scripture, a revelation of eternal facts and principles by which to live and die. As such we approach it in this book; not to analyse only or explain, but to submit and to believe; taking it as not only Pauline but Divine. But then, it is not the less therefore Pauline. And this means that both the thought and the circumstances of St Paul are to be traced and felt in it as truly, and as naturally, as if we had before us the letter of an Augustine, or a Luther, or a Pascal. He who chose the writers of the Holy Scriptures, many men scattered over many ages, used them each in his surroundings and in his character, yet so as to harmonize them all in the Book which, while many, is one. He used them with the sovereign skill of Deity. And that skilful use meant that He used their whole being, which He had made, and their whole circumstances, which He had ordered. They were indeed His amanuenses; nay, I fear not to say they were His pens. But He is such that He can manipulate as His facile implement no mere piece of mechanism, which, however subtle and powerful, is mechanism still, and can never

truly cause anything; He can take a human personality, made in His own image, pregnant, formative, causative, in all its living thought, sensibility, and will, and can throw it freely upon its task of thinking and expression—and behold, the product will be His; His matter, His thought, His exposition, His Word, "living and abiding for ever."

Thus we enter in spirit the Corinthian citizen's house, in the sunshine of the early Greek spring, and find our way invisible and unheard to where Tertius sits with his reed-pen and strips of papyrus, and where Paul is prepared to give him, word by word, sentence by sentence, this immortal message. Perhaps the corner of the room is heaped with hair-cloth from Cilicia, and the implements of the tent-maker. But the Apostle is now the guest of Gaius, a man whose means enable him to be "the host of the whole Church"; so we may rather think that for the time this manual toil is intermitted. Do we seem to see the form and face of him who is about to dictate? The mist of time is in our eyes; but we may credibly report that we find a small and much emaciated frame, and a face remarkable for its arched brows and wide forehead, and for the expressive mobility of the lips.* We trace in looks, in manner and tone of utterance, and even in unconscious attitude and action, tokens of a mind rich in every faculty, a nature equally strong in energy and in sympathy, made both to govern and to win, to will and to love. The man is great and wonderful, a master soul, subtle,

* See Lewin, *Life and Epistles of St Paul*, ii. 411, for an engraving of a fine medallion, shewing the heads of St Paul and St Peter. "The medal is referred to the close of the first century or the beginning of the second."

wise, and strong. Yet he draws us with pathetic force to his heart, as one who asks and will repay affection.

As we look on his face we think, with awe and gladness, that with those same thought-tired eyes (and are they not also troubled with disease?) he has literally seen, only twenty years ago, so he will quietly assure us, the risen and glorified Jesus. His work during those twenty years, his innumerable sufferings, above all, his spirit of perfect mental and moral sanity, yet of supernatural peace and love,—all make his assurance absolutely trustworthy. He is a transfigured man since that sight of Jesus Christ, who now "dwells in his heart by faith," and uses him as the vehicle of His will and work. And now listen. The Lord is speaking through His servant. The scribe is busy with his pen, as the message of Christ is uttered through the soul and from the lips of Paul.

CHAPTER II

THE WRITER AND HIS READERS

ROMANS i. 1-7

Ver. 1. **Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ.** So the man opens his Lord's message with his own name. We may, if we please, leave it and pass on, for to the letter-writer of that day it was as much a matter of course to prefix the personal name to the letter as it is to us to append it. But then, as now, the name was not a mere word of routine; certainly not in the communications of a religious leader. It avowed responsibility; it put in evidence a person. In a letter of public destination it set the man in the light and glare of publicity, as truly as when he spoke in the Christian assembly, or on the Areopagus, or from the steps of the castle at Jerusalem. It tells us here, on the threshold, that the messages we are about to read are given to us as "truth through personality"; they come through the mental and spiritual being of this wonderful and most real man. If we read his character aright in his letters, we see in him a fineness and dignity of thought which would not make the publication of himself a light and easy thing. But his sensibilities, with all else he has, have been given to Christ (who never either slights or spoils such gifts, while He accepts them); and if it will the better

win attention to the Lord that the servant should stand out conspicuously, to point to Him, it shall be done.

For he is indeed "*Jesus Christ's bondservant*"; not His ally merely, or His subject, or His friend. Recently, writing to the Galatian converts, he has been vindicating the glorious liberty of the Christian, set free at once from "the curse of the law" and from the mastery of self. But there too, at the close (vi. 17), he has dwelt on his own sacred bondage; "the brand of his Master, Jesus." The liberty of the Gospel is the silver side of the same shield whose side of gold is an unconditional vassalage to the liberating Lord. Our freedom is "in the Lord" alone; and to be "in the Lord" is to belong to Him, as wholly as a healthy hand belongs, in its freedom, to the physical centre of life and will. To be a bondservant is terrible in the abstract. To be "Jesus Christ's bondservant" is Paradise, in the concrete. Self-surrender, taken alone, is a plunge into a cold void. When it is surrender to "the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20), it is the bright home-coming of the soul to the seat and sphere of life and power.

This bondservant of His now before us, dictating, is called to be an Apostle. Such is his particular department of servitude in the "great house." It is a rare commission—to be a chosen witness of the Resurrection, a divinely authorized "bearer" of the holy Name, a first founder and guide of the universal Church, a *legatus a latere* of the Lord Himself. Yet the apostleship, to St Paul, is but a species of the one genus, bondservice. "To every man is his work," given by the one sovereign will. In a Roman household one slave would water the garden, another keep accounts, another

in the library would do skilled literary work; yet all equally would be "not their own, but bought with a price." So in the Gospel, then, and now. All functions of Christians are alike expressions of the one will of Him who has purchased, and who "calls."

Meanwhile, this bondservant-apostle, because "under authority," carries authority. His MASTER has spoken to him, that he may speak. He writes to the Romans as man, as friend, but also as the "vessel of choice, to bear the Name" (Acts ix. 15) of Jesus Christ.

Such is the sole essential work and purpose of his life. He is separated to the Gospel of God; isolated from all other ruling aims to this. In some respects he is the least isolated of men; he is in contact all round with human life. Yet he is "*separated.*" In Christ, and for Christ, he lives apart from even the worthiest personal ambitions. Richer than ever, since he "was in Christ" (xvi. 7), in all that makes man's nature wealthy, in power to know, to will, to love, he uses all his riches always for "this one thing," to make men understand "*the Gospel of God.*" Such isolation, behind a thousand contacts, is the Lord's call for His true followers still.

"*The Gospel*": word almost too familiar now, till the thing is too little understood. What is it? In its native meaning, its eternally proper meaning, it is the divine "Good Tidings." It is the announcement of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour of men, in whom God and man meet with joy. That announcement stands in living relation to a bright chain of precepts, and also to the sacred darkness of convictions and warnings; we shall see this amply illustrated in this Epistle. But neither precepts nor threatenings are properly *the Gospel.* The Gospel saves from sin, and

enables for holy conduct. But in itself it is the pure, mere message of redeeming Love.

It is "*the Gospel of God*"; that is, as the neighbouring sentences shew it, the Gospel of the blessed FATHER. Its origin is in the Father's love, the eternal hill whence runs the eternal stream of the work of the Son and the power of the Spirit. "God loved the world"; "The Father sent the Son." The stream leads us up to the mount. "Hereby perceive we the love of God." In the Gospel, and in it alone, we have that certainty, "God *is* Love."

Now he dilates a little in passing on this dear theme, the Gospel of God. He whom it reveals as eternal Love was true to Himself in the preparation as in the event; He promised His Gospel beforehand through His prophets in (the) holy Scriptures. The sunrise of Christ was no abrupt, insulated phenomenon, unintelligible because out of relation. "Since the world began" (Luke i. 70), from the dawn of human history, predictive word and manifold preparing work had gone before. To think now only of the prediction, more or less articulate, and not of the preparation through general divine dealings with man—such had the prophecy been that, as the pagan histories tell us,* "the whole East" heaved with expectations of a Judæan world-rule about the time when, as a fact, Jesus came. He came, alike to disappoint every merely popular hope and to satisfy at once the concrete details and the spiritual significance of the long forecast. And He sent His messengers out to the world carrying as their text

Ver. 2.

* Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus et constans opinio, esse in fatis ut eo tempore (cir. A.D. 70) profecti Judæa rerum potirentur.—Suetonius, *Vesp.*, c. 4. Tacitus (*Hist.*, v. 13) says the same, and that the hope was based on the *antiqui sacerdotum libri*.

and their voucher that old and multifold literature which is yet one Book; those "holy writings," (our own Old Testament, from end to end,) which were to them nothing less than the voice of the Holy Spirit. They always put the Lord, in their preaching, in contact with that prediction.

In this, as in other things, His glorious Figure is unique. There is no other personage in human history, himself a moral miracle, heralded by a verifiable foreshadowing in a complex literature of previous centuries.

"The hope of Israel" was, and is, a thing *sui generis*. Other preparations for the Coming were, as it were, sidelong and altogether by means of nature. In the Holy Scriptures the supernatural led directly and in its own way to the supreme supernatural Event; the Sacred Way to the Sanctuary.

What was the burthen of the vast prophecy, with its converging elements? It was concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Whatever the prophets themselves knew, or did not know, of the inmost import of their records and utterances, the import was this. The Lord and the Apostles do not commit us to believe that the old seers ever had a *full* conscious foresight, or even that in all they "wrote of Him" they knew that it was of Him they wrote; though they *had* insights above nature, and knew it, as when David "in the Spirit called Him Lord," and Abraham "saw His day." But they do amply commit us to believe, if we are indeed their disciples, that the whole revelation through Israel did, in a way quite of its own kind, "concern the Son of God." See this in such leading places as Luke xxiv. 25-27; John v. 39, 46; Acts iii. 21-25, x. 43, xxviii. 23.

Ver. 3.

A Mahometan in Southern India, not long ago, was

first drawn to faith in Jesus Christ by reading the genealogy with which St Matthew begins his narrative. Such a procession, he thought, must lead up a mighty name; and he approached with reverence the story of the Nativity. That genealogy is, in a certain sense, the prophecies in compendium. Its avenue is the miniature of theirs. Let us sometimes go back, as it were, and approach the Lord again through the ranks of His holy foretellers, to get a new impression of His majesty.

"*Concerning His Son.*" Around that radiant word, full of light and heat, the cold mists of many speculations have rolled themselves, as man has tried to analyse a divine and boundless fact. For St Paul, and for us, the fact is everything, for peace and life. This Jesus Christ is true Man; that is certain. He is also, if we trust His life and word, true Son of God. He is on the one hand personally distinct from Him whom He calls Father, and whom He loves, and who loves Him with infinite love. On the other hand He is so related to Him that He fully possesses His Nature, while He has that Nature wholly from Him. This is the teaching of Gospels and Epistles; this is the Catholic Faith. Jesus Christ is God, is Divine, truly and fully. He is implicitly called by the incommunicable Name (compare John xii. 41 with Isa. vi. 7). He is openly called God in His own presence on earth (John xx. 28). But what is, if possible, even more significant, because deeper below the surface—He is regarded as the eternally satisfying Object of man's trust and love (*e.g.* Phil. iii. 21, Eph. iii. 19). Yet Jesus Christ is always preached as related Son-wise to Another, so truly that the mutual love of the Two is freely adduced as type and motive for our love.

We can hardly make too much, in thought and

teaching, of this Divine Sonship, this Filial Godhead. It is the very "Secret of God" (Col. ii. 2), both as a light to guide our reason to the foot of the Throne, and as a power upon the heart. "He that hath the Son hath the Father"; "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; "He hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His Love."

Who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh. So the New Testament begins (Matt. i. 1); so it almost closes (Rev. xxii. 6). St Paul, in later years, recalls the Lord's human pedigree again (2 Tim. ii. 8): "Remember that Jesus Christ, *of the seed of David*, is risen from the dead." The old Apostle in that last passage, has entered the shadow of death; he feels with one hand for the rock of history, with the other for the pulse of eternal love. Here was the rock; the Lord of life was the Child of history, Son and Heir of a historical king, and then, as such, the Child of prophecy too. And this, against all surface appearances beforehand. The Davidic "ground" (Isa. liii. 2) had seemed to be dry as dust for generations, when the Root of endless life sprang up in it.

"*He was born*" of David's seed. Literally, the Greek may be rendered, "*He became, He came to be.*" Under either rendering we have the wonderful fact that He who in His higher Nature eternally *is*, above time and including it, did in His other Nature, by the door of *becoming*, enter time, and thus indeed "fill all things." This He did, and thus He is, '*according to the flesh.*" "Flesh" is, indeed, but a part of Manhood. But a part can represent the whole; and "flesh" is the part most antithetical to the Divine Nature, with which here Manhood is collocated and in a sense contrasted. So it is again below, ix. 5.

And now, of this blessed Son of David, we hear further:—who was designated to be Son of God; literally, "*defined as Son of God*," betokened to be such by "infallible proof." Never for an hour had he ceased to be, in fact, Son of God. To the man healed of birth-blindness He had said (John ix. 35), "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" But there was an hour when He became openly and so to speak officially what He always is naturally; somewhat as a born king is "made" king by coronation. Historical act then affirmed independent fact, and as it were gathered it into a point for use. This affirmation took place in power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, as a result of resurrection from the dead. "Sown in weakness," Jesus was indeed "raised in" majestic, tranquil "power." Without an effort He stepped from out of the depth of death, from under the load of sin. It was no flickering life, crucified but not quite killed, creeping back in a convalescence mis-called resurrection; it was the rising of the sun. That it was indeed day-light, and not day-dream, was shown not only in His mastery of matter, but in the transfiguration of His followers. No moral change was ever at once more complete and more perfectly healthful than what His return wrought in that large and various group, when they learnt to say, "We have seen the Lord." The man who wrote this Epistle had "seen Him last of all" (1 Cor. xv. 8). That was indeed a sight "in power," and working a transfiguration.

Ver. 4.

So was the Son of the Father affirmed to be what He is; so was He "made" to be, for us His Church, the Son, in whom we are sons. And all this was, "*according to the Spirit of holiness*"; answerably to the foreshadowing and foretelling of that Holy Spirit who, in the

prophets, "testified of the sufferings destined for the Christ, and of the glories that should follow" (1 Pet. i. 11).

Now lastly, in the Greek of the sentence, as if pausing for a solemn entrance, comes in the whole blessed Name; **even Jesus Christ our Lord.** Word by word the Apostle dictates, and the scribe obeys. JESUS, the human Name; CHRIST, the mystic Title; OUR LORD, the term of royalty and loyalty which binds us to Him, and Him to us. Let those four words be ours for ever. If everything else falls in ruins from the memory, let this remain, "the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever."

Ver. 5. **Through whom,** the Apostle's voice goes on, **we received grace and apostleship.** The Son was the Channel "through" which the Father's choice and call took effect. He "grasped" Paul (Phil. iii. 12), and joined him to Himself, and in Himself to the Father; and now through that Union the motions of the Eternal will move Paul. They move him, to give him "*grace and apostleship*"; that is, in effect, grace for apostleship, and apostleship as grace; the boon of the Lord's presence in him for the work, and the Lord's work as a spiritual boon. He often thus links the word "*grace*" with his great mission; for example, in Gal. ii. 9, Eph. iii. 2, 8, and perhaps Phil. i. 7. Alike the enabling peace and power for service, and then the service itself, are to the Christian a free, loving, beatifying gift.

Unto obedience of faith among all the Nations. This "*obedience of faith*" is in fact faith in its aspect as submission. What is faith? It is personal trust, personal self-entrustment to a person. It "gives up the case" to the Lord, as the one only possible Giver of pardon and of purity. It is "*submission* to the righteousness of God" (ch. x. 3). Blessed **the man who so**

obeys, stretching out arms empty and submissive to receive, in the void between them, Jesus Christ.

"*Among all the Nations*," "all the Gentiles." The words read easy to us, and pass perhaps half unnoticed, as a phrase of routine. Not so to the ex-Pharisee who dictated them here. A few years before he would have held it highly "unlawful to keep company with, or come unto, one of another nation" (Acts x. 2, 8). Now, in Christ, it is as if he had almost forgotten that it had been so. His whole heart, in Christ, is blent in personal love with hearts belonging to many nations; in spiritual affection he is ready for contact with all hearts. And now he, of all the Apostles, is the teacher who by life and word is to bring this glorious catholicity home for ever to all believing souls, our own included. It is St Paul pre-eminently who has taught man, as man, in Christ, to love man; who has made Hebrew, European, Hindoo, Chinese, Caffre, Esquimaux, actually one in the conscious brotherhood of eternal life.

For His Name's sake; for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ revealed. The Name is the self-unfolded Person, known and understood. Paul had indeed come to know that Name, and to pass it on was now his very life. He existed only to win for it more insight, more adoration, more love. "The Name" deserved that great soul's entire devotion. Does it not deserve our equally entire devotion now? Our lives shall be transfigured, in their measure, by taking for their motto also, "For His Name's sake."

Now he speaks direct of his Roman friends. **Among whom**, among these multifarious "Nations," **you too are**

Ver. 6. **Jesus Christ's called ones**; men who belong to Him, because "*called*" by Him. And what is "***called***"? Compare the places where the word is used

—or where its kindred words are used—in the Epistles, and you will find a certain holy speciality of meaning. "Invited" is no adequate paraphrase. The "called" man is the man who has been invited *and has come;* who has obeyed the eternal welcome; to whom the voice of the Lord has been effectual. See the word in the opening paragraphs of 1 Corinthians. There the Gospel is heard, externally, by a host of indifferent or hostile hearts, who think it "folly," or "a stumbling block." But among them are those who hear, and understand, and believe indeed. To them "Christ is God's power, and God's wisdom." And they are "the called."

In the Gospels, the words "chosen" and "called" are in antithesis; the called are many, the chosen few; the external hearers are many, the hearers inwardly are few. In the Epistles a developed use shews the change indicated here, and it is consistently maintained.

Ver. 7. **To all who in Rome are God's beloved ones.** Wonderful collocation, wonderful possibility! "*Beloved ones of God,*" as close to the eternal heart as it is possible to be, because "in the Beloved"; that is one side. "*In Rome,*" in the capital of universal paganism, material power, iron empire, immeasurable worldliness, flagrant and indescribable sin; that is the other side. "I know where thou dwellest," said the glorified Saviour to much tried disciples at a later day; "even where Satan has his throne" (Rev. ii. 13). That throne was conspicuously present in the Rome of Nero. Yet faith, hope, and love could breathe there, when the Lord "called." They could much more than breathe. This whole Epistle shows that a deep and developed faith, a glorious hope, and the mighty love of a holy life were matters of fact in men and women who every day of the year saw the world as it went

by in forum and basilica, in Suburra and Velabrum, in slave-chambers and in the halls of pleasure where they had to serve or to meet company. The atmosphere of heaven was carried down into that dark pool by the believing souls who were bidden to live there. They lived the heavenly life in Rome; as the creature of the air in our stagnant waters weaves and fills its silver diving-bell, and works and thrives in peace far down.

Read some vivid picture of Roman life, and think of this. See it as it is shown by Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal, Martial; or as modern hands, Becker's or Farrar's, have restored it from their materials. What a deadly air for the regenerate soul—deadly not only in its vice, but in its magnificence, and in its thought! But nothing is deadly to the Lord Jesus Christ. The soul's regeneration means not only new ideas and likings, but an eternal Presence, the indwelling of the Life itself. That Life could live at Rome; and therefore "*God's beloved ones in Rome*" could live there also, while it was His will they should be there. The argument comes *a fortiori* to ourselves.

(His) called holy ones; they were "*called*," in the sense we have seen, and now, by that effectual Voice, drawing them into Christ, they were constituted "*holy ones*," "*saints*." What does that word mean? Whatever its etymology may be,* its usage gives us the thought of dedication to God, connexion with Him, separation to His service, His will. *The saints* are those who belong to Him, His personal property, for His ends. Thus it is used habitually in the Scriptures for *all Christians, supposed to be true to their name.* Not an inner circle,

* The *linguistic root* seems to point directly not to separation (as often said) but to worship, reverence.

but all, bear the title. It is not only a glorified aristocracy, but the believing commonalty; not the stars of the eternal sky but the flowers sown by the Lord in the common field; even in such a tract of that field as "Cæsar's household" was (Phil. iv. 22).

Habitually therefore the Apostle gives the term "*saints*" to whole communities; as if baptism always gave, or sealed, saintship. In a sense it did, and does. But then, this was, and is, on the assumption of the concurrence of possession with title. The title left the individual still bound to "examine himself, whether *he was* in the faith" (2 Cor. xiii. 5).

These happy residents at Rome are now greeted and blessed in their Father's and Saviour's Name; Grace to you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. "*Grace*"; what is it? Two ideas lie there together; favour and gratuity. The grace of God is His favouring will and work for us, and in us; gratuitous, utterly and to the end unearned. Put otherwise, (and with the remembrance that His great gifts are but modes of Himself, are in fact Himself in will and action,) grace is God for us, grace is God in us, sovereign, willing, kind. "*Peace*"; what is it? The holy repose within, and so around, which comes of the man's acceptance with God and abode in God; an "all is well" in the heart, and in the believer's contact with circumstances, as he rests in his Father and his Redeemer. "Peace, perfect peace"; under the sense of demerit, and amidst the crush of duties, and on the crossing currents of human joy and sorrow, and in the mystery of death; because of the God of Peace, who has made peace for us through the Cross of His Son, and is peace in us, "by the Spirit which He hath given us."

CHAPTER III

GOOD REPORT OF THE ROMAN CHURCH: PAUL NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

ROMANS i. 8-17

HE has blessed the Roman Christians in the name of the Lord. Now he hastens to tell them how he blesses God for them, and how full his heart is of them. The Gospel is warm all through with life and love; this great message of doctrine and precept is poured from a fountain full of personal affection.

Ver. 8. **Now first I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, about you all.** It is his delight to give thanks for all the good he knows of in his brethren. Seven of his Epistles open with such thanksgivings, which at once convey the commendations which love rejoices to give, wherever possible, and trace all spiritual virtue straight to its Source, the Lord. Nor only here to "the Lord," but to "*my* God"; a phrase used, in the New Testament, only by St Paul, except that one utterance of ELI, ELI, by his dying Saviour. It is the expression of an indescribable appropriation and reverent intimacy. The believer grudges his God to none; he rejoices with great joy over every soul that finds its wealth in Him. But at the centre of all joy and love is this—"*my* God"; "Christ Jesus *my* Lord"; "who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*."

Is it selfish? Nay, it is the language of a personality where Christ has dethroned self in His own favour, but in which therefore reigns now the highest happiness, the happiness which animates and maintains a self-forgetful love of all. And this holy intimacy, with its action in thanks and petition, is all the while "*through Jesus Christ*," the Mediator and Brother. The man knows God as "*my* God," and deals with Him as such, never out of that Beloved Son who is equally One with the believer and with the Father, no alien medium, but the living point of unity.

What moves his thanksgivings? **Because your faith is spoken of,** more literally, **is carried as tidings, over the whole world.** Go where he will, in Asia, in Macedonia, in Achaia, in Illyricum, he meets believing "strangers from Rome," with spiritual news from the Capital, announcing, with a glad solemnity, that at the great Centre of this world the things eternal are proving their power, and that the Roman mission is remarkable for its strength and simplicity of "*faith*," its humble reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ, and loving allegiance to Him. Such news, wafted from point to point of that early Christendom, was frequent then; we see another beautiful example of it where he tells the Thessalonians (1 Thess. i. 8-10) how everywhere in his Greek tour he found the news of their conversion running in advance of him, to greet him at each arrival. What special importance would such intelligence bear when it was good news from Rome!

Still in our day over the world of Missions similar tidings travel. Only a few years ago "the saints" of Indian Tinnevelly heard of the distress of their brethren of African Uganda, and sent with loving eagerness "to their necessity." Only last year (1892) an English

visitor to the Missions of Labrador found the disciples of the Moravian Brethren there full of the wonders of grace manifested in those same African believers.

This constant good tidings from the City makes him the more glad because of its correspondence with his incessant thought, prayer, and yearning over them.

Ver. 9. **For God is my record, my witness,*** of this; the God **whom I serve**, at once, so the Greek (λατρεύω) implies, with adoration and obedience, **in my spirit, in the Gospel of His Son.** The "*for*" gives the connexion we have just indicated; he rejoices to hear of their faith, *for* the Lord knows how much they are in his prayers. The divine Witness is the more instinctively appealed to, because these thoughts and prayers are for a mission-Church, and the relations between St Paul and his God are above all missionary relations. He "*serves Him in the Gospel of His Son*," the Gospel of the God who is known and believed in His Christ. He "serves Him in *the Gospel*"; that is, in *the propagation* of it. So he often means, where he speaks of "the Gospel"; take for example ver. 1 above; xv. 16, 19 below; Phil. i. 5, 12; ii. 22. "He serves Him," in that great branch of ministry, "*in his spirit*," with his whole love, will, and mind, working in communion with his Lord. And now to this eternal Friend and Witness he appeals to seal his assurance of incessant intercessions for them; **how without ceasing**, as a habit constantly in action, **I make mention of you**, calling them up by name, specifying before the Father Rome, and Aquila, and Andronicus, and Junias, and Persis, and Mary, and the whole circle, personally known or not, **in my prayers**; literally, **on occasion of**

* The word "*record*" in this sense came into English from Old French. (Skeat: *Etymological Dictionary*.)

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my prayers; whenever he found himself at prayer, statedly or as it were casually remembering and beseeching.

The prayers of St Paul are a study by themselves. See his own accounts of them, to the Corinthians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the Thessalonians, and Philemon. Observe their topic; it is almost always the growth of grace in the saints, to their Master's glory. Observe now still more their manner; the frequency, the diligence, the resolution which grapples, wrestles, with the difficulties of prayer, so that in Col. ii. 1 he calls his prayer simply "*a great wrestling*." Learn here how to deal with God for those for whom you work, shepherd of souls, messenger of the Word, Christian man or woman who in any way are called to help other hearts in Christ.

In this case his prayers have a very definite direction;

Ver. 10. he is requesting, if somehow, now at length, my way shall be opened, in the will of God, to come to you.

It is a quite simple, quite natural petition. His inward harmony with the Lord's will never excludes the formation and expression of such requests, with the reverent "*if*" of submissive reserve. The "indifference" of mystic pietism, which at least discourages articulate contingent petitions, is unknown to the Apostles; "in everything, with thanksgiving, they make their requests known unto God." And they find such expression harmonized, in a holy experience, with a profound rest "*within* this will," this "sweet beloved will of God." Little did he here foresee *how* his way would be opened; that it would lie through the tumult in the Temple, the prisons of Jerusalem and Cæsarea, and the cyclone of the Adrian sea. He had in view a missionary journey to Spain, in which Rome was to be taken by the way.

"So God grants prayer, but in His love
Makes ways and times His own."

His heart yearns for this Roman visit. We may almost render the Greek of the next clause, **For I am homesick for a sight of you**; he uses the word by which elsewhere he describes Philippian Epaphroditus' longing to be back at Philippi (Phil. ii. 26), and again his own longing to see the son of his heart, Timotheus (2 Tim. i. 4). Such is the Gospel, that its family affection throws the light of home on even unknown regions where dwell "the brethren." In this case the longing love however has a purpose most practical; **that I may impart to you some spiritual gift of grace, with a view to your establishment.** The word rendered "*gift of grace*" (χάρισμα) is used in some places (see especially 1 Cor. xii. 4, 9, 28, 30, 31) with a certain special reference to the mysterious "Tongues," "Interpretations," and "Prophecies," given in the primeval Churches. And we gather from the Acts and the Epistles that these grants were not ordinarily made where an Apostle was not there to lay on his hands. But it is not likely that this is the import of this present passage. Elsewhere in the Epistle * the word *charisma* is used with its largest and deepest reference; God's gift of blessing in Christ. Here then, so we take it, he means that he pines to convey to them, as his Lord's messenger, some new development of spiritual light and joy; to expound "the Way" to them more perfectly; to open up

Ver. 11.

* See verses 15, 16, 23, xi. 29. xii. 6 is the only passage which at all looks the other way, and that passage implies that the Romans *already* possessed the wonder-working gifts.

to them such fuller and deeper insights into the riches of Christ that they, better using their possession of the Lord, might as it were gain new possessions in Him, and might stand more boldly on the glorious certainties they held. And this was to be done ministerially, not magisterially. For he goes on to say that the longed-for visit would be his gain as well as theirs; that is, with a view to my concurrent encouragement among you, by our mutual faith, yours and mine together. Shall we call this a sentence of fine tact; beautifully conciliatory and endearing? Yes, but it is also perfectly sincere. True tact is only the skill of sympathetic love, not the less genuine in its thought because that thought seeks to please and win. He is glad to shew himself as his disciples' brotherly friend; but then he first *is* such, and enjoys the character, and has continually found and felt his own soul made glad and strong by the witness to the Lord which far less gifted believers bore, as he and they talked together. Does not every true teacher know this in his own experience? If we are not merely lecturers on Christianity but witnesses for Christ, we know what it is to hail with deep thanksgivings the "*encouragement*" we have had from the lips of those who perhaps believed long after we did, and have been far less advantaged outwardly than we have been. We have known and blessed the "*encouragement*" carried to us by little believing children, and young men in their first faith, and poor old people on their comfortless beds, ignorant in this world, illuminated in the Lord. "*Mutual faith*," the pregnant phrase of the Apostle, faith residing in each of both parties, and owned by

Ver. 12.

each to the other, is a mighty power for Christian "*encouragement*" still.*

Ver. 13. **But I would not have you ignorant, brethren.** This is a characteristic term of expression with him.† He delights in confidence and information, and not least about his own plans bearing on his friends. **That often I purposed** (or better, in our English idiom, **have purposed**) **to come to you, (but I have been hindered up till now,) that I might have some fruit among you too, as actually among the other Nations.** He cannot help giving more and yet more intimation of his loving *gravitation* towards them; nor yet of his gracious avarice for "*fruit*," result, harvest and vintage for Christ, in the way of helping on Romans, as well as Asiatics, and Macedonians, and Achaians, to live a fuller life in Him. This, we may infer from the whole Epistle, would be the chief kind of "fruit" in his view at Rome; but not this only. For we shall see him at once go on to anticipate an evangelistic work at Rome, a speaking of the Gospel message where there would be a temptation to be "ashamed" of it. Edification of believers may be his main aim. But conversion of pagan souls to God cannot possibly be dissociated from it.

In passing we see, with instruction, that St Paul made many plans which came to nothing; he tells us this here without apology or misgiving. He claims accordingly no such practical omniscience, actual or possible, as would make his resolutions and forecasts infallible. Tacitly, at least, he wrote "*If the Lord*

* The word "*comfort*" in the English Version here, as commonly elsewhere, represents παρακαλεῖν, παράκλησις, which commonly denote not so much the consolation of grief as the encouragement which banishes depression.

† xi. 25; 1 Cor. x. 1, xii. 1; 2 Cor. i. 8; 1 Thess. iv. 13.

will," across them all, unless indeed there came a case where, as when he was guided out of Asia to Macedonia (Acts xvi. 6-10), direct intimation was given him, abnormal, supernatural, quite *ab extra*, that such and not such was to be his path.

But now, he is not only "*homesick*" for Rome, with a yearning love; he feels his obligation to Rome, with a wakeful conscience. **Alike to Greeks and to Barbarians, to wise men and to unthinking, I am in debt.** Mankind is on his heart, in the sorts and differences of its culture. On the one hand were "*the Greeks*"; that is to say, in the then popular meaning of the word, the peoples possessed of what we now call "classical" civilization, Greek and Roman; an inner circle of these were "*the wise*," the literati, the readers, writers, thinkers, in the curriculum of those literatures and philosophies. On the other hand were "*the Barbarians*," the tongues and tribes outside the Hellenic pale, Pisidian, Pamphylian, Galatian, Illyrian, and we know not who besides; and then, among them, or anywhere, "*the unthinking*," the numberless masses whom the educated would despise or forget as utterly untrained in the schools, unversed in the great topics of man and the world; the people of the field, the market, and the kitchen. To the Apostle, because to his Lord, all these were now impartially his claimants, his creditors; he "*owed them*" the Gospel which had been trusted to him for them. Naturally, his will might be repelled alike by the frown or smile of the Greek, and by the coarse earthliness of the Barbarian. But supernaturally, in Christ, he loved both, and scrupulously remembered his *duty* to both. Such is the true missionary spirit still, in whatever region, under whatever conditions. The Christian

Ver. 14.

man, and the Christian Church, delivered from the world, is yet its debtor. "Woe is to him, to it, if" that debt is not paid, if that Gospel is "hidden in a napkin."

Thus he is ready, and more than ready, to pay his debt to Rome. So (to render literally) what relates to me is eager, to you too, to the men in Rome, to preach the Gospel. "*What relates to* me"; there is an emphasis on "*me*," as if to say that the hindrance, whatever it is, is not in him, but around him. The doors have been shut, but the man stands behind them, in act to pass in when he may.

Ver. 15.

His eagerness is no light-heartedness, no carelessness of when or where. This wonderful missionary is too sensitive to facts and ideas, too rich in imagination, not to feel the peculiar, nay the awful greatness, of a summons to Rome. He understands culture too well not to feel its possible obstacles. He has seen too much of both the real grandeur and the harsh force of the imperial power in its extension not to feel a genuine awe as he thinks of meeting that power at its gigantic Centre. There is that in him which fears Rome. But he is therefore the very man to go there, for he understands the magnitude of the occasion, and he will the more deeply retire upon his Lord for peace and power.

Thus with a pointed fitness he tells himself and his friends, just here, that he is "*not ashamed of the Gospel.*"

Ver. 16.

For I am not ashamed; I am ready even for Rome, for this terrible Rome. I have a message which, though Rome looks as if she must despise it, I know is not to be despised. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel;* for it is God's power to salvation, for

* The words "*of Christ*" must be omitted from the text here.

every one who believes, alike for Jew, (first,) and for Greek. For God's righteousness is in it unveiled,
Ver. 17. from faith on to faith; as it stands written, **But the just man on faith shall live.**

These words give out the great theme of the Epistle. The Epistle, therefore, is infinitely the best commentary on them, as we follow out its argument and hear its message. Here it shall suffice us to note only a point or two, and so pass on.

First, we recollect that this Gospel, this Glad Tidings, is, in its essence, Jesus Christ. It is, supremely, "He, not it"; Person, not theory. Or rather, it is authentic and eternal theory in vital and eternal connexion everywhere with a Person. As such it is truly "*power*," in a sense as profoundly natural as it is divine. It is power, not only in the cogency of perfect principle, but in the energy of an eternal Life, an almighty Will, an infinite Love.

Then, we observe that this message of power, which is, in its burthen, the Christ of God, unfolds first, at its foundation, in its front, "*the Righteousness of God*"; not first His Love, but "His Righteousness." Seven times elsewhere in the Epistle comes this phrase *; rich materials for ascertaining its meaning in the spiritual dialect of St Paul. Out of these passages, iii. 26 gives us the key. There "the righteousness of God," seen as it were in action, ascertained by its effects, is that which secures "*that He shall be just, and the Justifier of the man who belongs to faith in Jesus.*" It is that which makes wonderfully possible the mighty paradox that the Holy One, eternally truthful, eternally rightful, infinitely "law-abiding" in His jealousy for that Law which is

* iii. 5, 21, 22, 23, 26; x. 3 twice.

in fact His Nature expressing itself in precept, nevertheless can and does say to man, in his guilt and forfeit, "I, thy Judge, lawfully acquit thee, lawfully accept thee, lawfully embrace thee." In such a context we need not fear to explain this great phrase, in this its first occurrence, to mean the Acceptance accorded by the Holy Judge to sinful man. Thus it stands practically equivalent to—God's way of justifying the ungodly, His method for liberating His love while He magnifies His law. In effect, not as a translation but as an explanation, God's Righteousness is God's Justification.

Then again, we note the emphasis and the repetition here of the thought of *faith*. "*To every one that believeth*"; "*From faith on to faith*"; "*The just man on faith shall live.*" Here, if anywhere, we shall find ample commentary in the Epistle. Only let us remember from the first that in the Roman Epistle, as everywhere in the New Testament, we shall see "*faith*" used in its natural and human sense; we shall find that it means personal reliance. *Fides est fiducia*, "Faith is trust," say the masters of Reformation theology. *Refellitur inanis hæreticorum fiducia*, "We refute the heretics' empty 'trust,'" says the Council of Trent* against them; but in vain. Faith is trust. It is in this sense that our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Gospels, invariably uses the word. For this is its human sense, its sense in the street and market; and the Lord, the Man of men, uses the dialect of His race. Faith, infinitely wonderful and mysterious from some points of view, is the simplest thing in the world from others. That sinners, conscious of their guilt, should be brought so to see their Judge's

* Session VI., ch. ix.

heart as to take His word of peace to mean what it says, is miracle. But that they should trust His word, having seen His heart, is nature, illuminated and led by grace, but nature still. The "*faith*" of Jesus Christ and the Apostles is trust. It is not a faculty for mystical intuitions. It is our taking the Trustworthy at His word. It is the opening of a mendicant hand to receive the gold of Heaven; the opening of dying lips to receive the water of life. It is that which makes a void place for Jesus Christ to fill, that He may be man's Merit, man's Peace, and man's Power.

Hence the overwhelming prominence of faith in the Gospel. It is the correlative of the overwhelming, the absolute, prominence of Jesus Christ. Christ is all. Faith is man's acceptance of Him as such. "Justification by Faith" is not acceptance because faith is a valuable thing, a merit, a recommendation, a virtue.* It is acceptance because of Jesus Christ, whom man, dropping all other hopes, receives. It is, let us repeat it, the sinner's empty hand and parted lips. It has absolutely nothing to do with earning the gift of God, the water and the bread of God; it has all to do with taking it. This we shall see open out before us as we proceed.

So the Gospel "*unveils God's righteousness*"; it draws the curtains from His glorious secret. And as each fold is lifted, the glad beholder looks on "*from faith to faith.*" He finds that this reliance is to be *his* part; first, last, midst, and without end. He takes Jesus Christ by faith; he holds Him by faith; he uses Him by faith; he lives, he dies, in Him by faith; that

* See this admirably explained by Hooker, *Discourse of Justification*, § 31.

is to say, always by Him, by Him received, held, used.

Then lastly, we mark the quotation from the Prophet, who, for the Apostle, is the organ of the Holy Ghost. What Habakkuk wrote is, for Paul, what God says, God's Word. The Prophet, as we refer to his brief pages, manifestly finds his occasion and his first significance in the then state of his country and his people. If we please, we may explain the words as a patriot's contribution to the politics of Jerusalem, and pass on. But if so, we pass on upon a road unknown to our Lord and His Apostles. To Him, to them, the prophecies had more in them than the Prophets knew; and Habakkuk's appeal to Judah to retain the Lord Jehovah among them in all His peace and power, by trusting Him, is known by St Paul to be for all time an oracle about the work of faith. So he sees it in a message straight to the soul which asks how, if Christ is God's Righteousness, shall I, a sinner, win Christ for me. "Wouldst thou indeed be *just* with God, right with Him as Judge, accepted by the Holy One? Take His Son in the empty arms of mere trust, and He is thine for this need, and for all."

"*I am not ashamed of the Gospel.*" So the Apostle affirms, as he looks toward Rome. What is it about this Gospel of God, and of His Son, which gives occasion for such a word? Why do we find, not here only, but elsewhere in the New Testament, this contemplated possibility that the Christian may be ashamed of his creed, and of his Lord? "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed" (Luke ix. 26); "Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of our Lord"; "Nevertheless, I am not ashamed" (2 Tim. i. 8, 12). This

is paradoxical, as we come to think upon it. There is much about the purity of the Gospel which might occasion, and does too often occasion, an awe and dread of it, seemingly reasonable. There is much about its attendant mysteries which might seem to excuse an attitude, however mistaken, of reverent suspense. But what is there about this revelation of the heart of Eternal Love, this record of a Life equally divine and human, of a Death as majestic as it is infinitely pathetic, and then of a Resurrection out of death, to occasion shame? Why, in view of this, should man be shy to avow his faith, and to let it be known that this is all in all to him, his life, his peace, his strength, his surpassing interest and occupation?

More than one analysis of the phenomenon, which we all know to be fact, may be suggested. But for our part we believe that the true solution lies near the words sin, pardon, self-surrender. The Gospel reveals the eternal Love, but under conditions which remind man that he has done his worst to forfeit it. It tells him of a peace and strength sublime and heavenly; but it asks him, in order to receive them, to kneel down in the dust and take them, unmerited, for nothing. And it reminds them that he, thus delivered and endowed, is by the same act the property of his Deliverer; that not only the highest benefit of his nature is secured by his giving himself over to God, but the most inexorable obligation lies on him to do so. He is not his own, but bought with a price.

Such views of the actual relation between man and God, even when attended, as they are in the Gospel, with such indications of man's true greatness as are found nowhere else, are deeply repellent to the soul that has not yet seen itself and God in the light of

truth. And the human being who *has* got that sight, and has submitted himself indeed, yet, the moment he looks outside the blessed shrine of his own union with his Lord, is tempted to be reticent about a creed which he knows once repelled and angered him. Well did Paul remember his old hatred and contempt; and he felt the temptations of that memory, when he presented Christ either to the Pharisee or to the Stoic, and now particularly when he thought of "bearing witness of Him at Rome" (Acts xxiii. 11), imperial, overwhelming Rome. But then he looked again from them to Jesus Christ, and the temptation was beneath his feet, and the Gospel, everywhere, was upon his lips.

CHAPTER IV

NEED FOR THE GOSPEL: GOD'S ANGER AND MAN'S SIN

ROMANS i. 18-23

WE have as it were touched the heart of the Apostle as he weighs the prospect of his Roman visit, and feels, almost in one sensation, the tender and powerful attraction, the solemn duty, and the strange solicitation to shrink from the deliverance of his message. Now his lifted forehead, just lighted up by the radiant truth of Righteousness by Faith, is shadowed suddenly. He is not ashamed of the Gospel; he will speak it out, if need be, in the Cæsar's own presence, and in that of his brilliant and cynical court. For there is a pressing, an awful need that he should thus "despise the shame." The very conditions in human life which occasion an instinctive tendency to be reticent of the Gospel, are facts of dreadful urgency and peril. Man does not like to be exposed to himself, and to be summoned to the faith and surrender claimed by Christ. But man, whatever he likes or dislikes, is a sinner, exposed to the eyes of the All-Pure, and lying helpless, amidst all his dreams of pride, beneath the wrath of God. Such is the logic of this stern sequel to the affirmation, "*I am not ashamed.*"

Ver. 18. For God's wrath is revealed, from heaven, upon all godlessness and unrighteousness of men who in unrighteousness hold down the truth. "*God's wrath*

is revealed"; Revealed in "the holy Scriptures," in every history, by every Prophet, by every Psalmist; this perhaps is the main bearing of his thought. But revealed also antecedently and concurrently in that mysterious, inalienable conscience, which is more truly part of man than his five senses. Conscience *sees* that there is an eternal difference between right and wrong, and *feels*, in the dark, the relation of that difference to a law, a Lawgiver, and a doom. Conscience is aware of a fiery light beyond the veil. Revelation meets its wistful gaze, lifts the veil, and affirms the fact of the wrath of God, and of His judgment coming.

Let us not shun that "revelation." It is not the Gospel. The Gospel, as we have seen, is in itself one pure warm light of life and love. But then it can never be fully understood until, sooner or later, we have seen something, and believed something, of the truth of the anger of the Holy One. From our idea of that anger let us utterly banish every thought of impatience, of haste, of what is arbitrary, of what is in the faintest degree unjust, inequitable. It is the anger of Him who never for a moment can be untrue to Himself; and He is Love, and is Light. But He is also, so also says His Word, consuming Fire (Heb. x. 31, xii. 29); and it is "a fearful thing to fall into His hands." Nowhere and never is God not Love, as the Maker and Preserver of His creatures. But nowhere also and never is He not Fire, as the judicial Adversary of evil, the Antagonist of the will that chooses sin. Is there "nothing in God to fear"? "Yea," says His Son (Luke xii. 5), "I say unto you, fear Him."

At the present time there is a deep and almost ubiquitous tendency to ignore the revelation of the wrath of God. No doubt there have been times, and

quarters, in the story of Christianity, when that revelation was thrown into disproportionate prominence, and men shrank from Christ (so Luther tells us he did in his youth) as from One who was nothing if not the inexorable Judge. They saw Him habitually as He is seen in the vast Fresco of the Sistine Chapel, a sort of Jupiter Tonans, casting His foes for ever from His presence; a Being *from* whom, not *to* whom, the guilty soul must fly. But the reaction from such thoughts, at present upon us, has swung to an extreme indeed, until the tendency of the pulpit, and of the exposition, is to say practically that there is nothing in God to be afraid of; that the words hope and love are enough to neutralize the most awful murmurs of conscience, and to cancel the plainest warnings of the loving Lord Himself. Yet that Lord, as we ponder His words in all the four Gospels, so far from speaking such "peace" as this, seems to reserve it to Himself, rather than to His messengers, to utter the most formidable warnings. And the earliest literature which follows the New Testament shows that few of His sayings had sunk deeper into His disciples' souls than those which told them of the two Ways and of the two Ends.

Let us go to Him, the all-benignant Friend and Teacher, to learn the true attitude of thought towards Him as "the Judge, strong and patient," "but who will in no wise clear the guilty" by unsaying His precepts and putting by His threats. He assuredly will teach us, in this matter, no lessons of hard and narrow denunciation, nor encourage us to sit in judgment on the souls and minds of our brethren. But He will teach us to take deep and awful views for ourselves of both the pollution and also *the guilt* of sin. He will constrain us to carry those views all through our personal

theology, and our personal anthropology too. He will make it both a duty and a possibility for us, in right measure, in right manner, tenderly, humbly, governed by His Word, to let others know what our convictions are about the Ways and the Ends. And thus, as well as otherwise, He will make His Gospel to be to us no mere luxury or ornament of thought and life, as it were a decorous gilding upon essential worldliness and the ways of self. He will unfold it as the soul's refuge and its home. From Himself as Judge He will draw us in blessed flight to Himself as Propitiation and Peace. "*From Thy wrath, and from everlasting condemnation, Good Lord*—Thyself—*deliver us.*"

This wrath, holy, passionless, yet awfully personal, "*is revealed, from heaven.*" That is to say it is revealed as coming from heaven, when the righteous Judge "shall be revealed from heaven, taking vengeance" (2 Thess. i. 7, 8). In that pure upper world He sits whose wrath it is. From that stainless sky of His presence its white lightnings will fall, "*upon all godlessness and unrighteousness of men,*" upon every kind of violation of conscience, whether done against God or man; upon "*godlessness,*" which blasphemes, denies, or ignores the Creator; upon "*unrighteousness,*" which wrests the claims whether of Creator or of creature. Awful opposites to the "two great Commandments of the Law"! The Law must be utterly vindicated upon them at last. Conscience must be eternally verified at last, against all the wretched suppressions of it that man has ever tried.

For the men in question "*hold down the truth in unrighteousness.*" The rendering "*hold down*" is certified by both etymology and context; the only possible other rendering, "*hold fast,*" is negatived by

the connexion. The thought given us is that man, fallen from the harmony with God in which Manhood was made, but still keeping manhood, and therefore conscience, is never naturally ignorant of the difference between right and wrong, never naturally, innocently, unaware that he is accountable. On the other hand he is never fully willing, of himself, to do all he knows of right, all he knows he ought, all the demand of the righteous law above him. "*In unrighteousness*," in a life which at best is not wholly and cordially with the will of God, "*he holds down the truth*," silences the haunting fact that there is a claim he will not meet, a will he ought to love, but to which he prefers his own. The majesty of eternal right, always intimating the majesty of an eternal Righteous One, he thrusts below his consciousness, or into a corner of it, and keeps it there, that he may follow his own way. More or less, it wrestles with him for its proper place. And its even half-understood efforts may, and often do, exercise a deterrent force upon the energies of his self-will. But they do not dislodge it; he would rather have his way. With a force sometimes deliberate, sometimes impulsive, sometimes habitual, "*he holds down*" the unwelcome monitor.

Deep is the moral responsibility incurred by such repression. For man has always, by the very state of the case, within him and around him, evidence for a personal righteous Power "with Whom he has to do." Because

Ver. 19. that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested (or rather, perhaps, in our idiom, has manifested) it to them. "*That which is known*"; that is, practically, "*that which is knowable, that which may be known.*" There is that about the Eternal which indeed neither is nor can be known,

with the knowledge of mental comprehension. "Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?" All thoughtful Christians are in this respect agnostics that they gaze on the bright Ocean of Deity, and know that they do not know it in its fathomless but radiant depths, nor can explore its expanse which has no shore. They rest before absolute mystery with a repose as simple (if possible more simple) as that with which they contemplate the most familiar and intelligible event. But this is not not to know Him. It leaves man quite as free to be sure that He is, to be as certain that He is Personal, and is Holy, as man is certain of his own consciousness, and conscience.

That there is Personality behind phenomena, and that this great Personality is righteous, St Paul here affirms to be "*manifest*," disclosed, visible, "*in men*." It is a fact present, however partially apprehended, in human consciousness. And more, this consciousness is itself part of the fact; indeed it is that part without which all others would be as nothing. To man without conscience—really, naturally, innocently without conscience—and without ideas of causation, the whole majesty of the Universe might be unfolded with a fulness beyond all our present experience; but it would say absolutely nothing of either Personality or Judgment. It is by the world within that we are able in the least degree to apprehend the world without. But having, naturally and inalienably, the world of personality and of conscience within us, we are beings to whom God can manifest, and has manifested, the knowable about Himself, in His universe.

Ver. 20. **For His things unseen, ever since the creation of the universe, are full in (man's) view, presented to (man's) mind by His things made—His ever-**

lasting power and Godlikeness together—so as to leave them inexcusable. Since the ordered world was, and since man was, as its observer and also as its integral part, there has been present to man's spirit—supposed true to its own creation—adequate testimony around him, taken along with that within him, to evince the reality of a supreme and persistent Will, intending order, and thus intimating Its own correspondence to conscience, and expressing Itself in "things made" of such manifold glory and wonder as to intimate the Maker's majesty as well as righteousness. What is That, what is He, to whom the splendours of the day and the night, the wonders of the forest and the sea, bear witness? He is not only righteous Judge but King eternal. He is not only charged with my guidance; He has rights illimitable over me. I am wrong altogether if I am not in submissive harmony with Him; if I do not surrender, and adore.

Thus it has been, according to St. Paul, "*ever since the creation of the universe*" (and of man in it). And such everywhere is the Theism of Scripture. It maintains, or rather it states as certainty, that man's knowledge of God began with his being as man. To see the Maker in His works is not, according to the Holy Scriptures, only the slow and difficult issue of a long evolution which led through far lower forms of thought, the fetish, the nature-power, the tribal god, the national god, to the idea of a Supreme. Scripture presents man as made in the image of the Supreme, and capable from the first of a true however faint apprehension of Him. It assures us that man's lower and distorted views of nature and of personal power behind it are degenerations, perversions, issues of a mysterious primeval dislocation of man from his

harmony with God. The believer in the holy Scriptures, in the sense in which our Lord and the Apostles believed in them, will receive this view of the primeval history of Theism as a true report of God's account of it. Remembering that it concerns an otherwise unknown moment of human spiritual history, he will not be disturbed by alleged evidence against it from lower down the stream. Meanwhile he will note the fact that among the foremost students of Nature in our time there are those who affirm the rightness of such an attitude. It is not lightly that the Duke of Argyll writes words like these :—

"I doubt (to say the truth, I disbelieve) that we shall ever come to know by science anything more than we now know about the origin of man. I believe we shall always have to rest on that magnificent and sublime outline which has been given us by the great Prophet of the Jews."*

So man, being what he is and seeing what he sees, is "without excuse": **Because, knowing God, they did not**
Ver. 21. **glorify Him as God, nor thank Him, but proved futile in their ways of thinking, and their unintelligent heart was darkened. Asserting themselves**
Ver. 22. **for wise they turned fools, and transmuted the glory of the immortal God in a semblance of the likeness of mortal man, and of things winged, quadruped, and reptile.** Man, placed by God in His universe, and himself made in God's image, naturally and inevitably "*knew God.*" Not necessarily in that inner sense of spiritual harmony and union which is (John xvii. 3) the life eternal; but in the sense of a perception of His being and His character

* *Geology and the Deluge*, p. 46 (Glasgow, 1885).

adequate, at its faintest, to make a moral claim. But somehow—a somehow which has to do with a revolt of man's will from God to self—that claim was, and is, disliked. Out of that dislike has sprung, in man's spiritual history, a reserve towards God, a tendency to question His purpose, His character, His existence; or otherwise, to degrade the conception of Personality behind phenomena into forms from which the multifold monster of idolatry has sprung, as if phenomena were due to personalities no better and no greater than could be imaged by man or by beast, things of limit and of passion; at their greatest terrible, but not holy; not ultimate; not One.

Man has spent on these unworthy "ways of thinking" a great deal of weak and dull reasoning and imbecile imagination, but also some of the rarest and most splendid of the riches of his mind, made in the image of God. But all this thinking, because conditioned by a wrong attitude of his being as a whole, has had "*futile*" issues, and has been in the truest sense "*unintelligent*," failing to see inferences aright and as a whole. It has been a struggle "*in the dark*"; yea, a descent from the light into moral and mental "*folly*."

Was it not so, is not so still? If man is indeed made in the image of the living Creator, a moral personality, and placed in the midst of "the myriad world, His shadow," then whatever process of thought leads man away from Him has somewhere in it a fallacy unspeakable, and inexcusable. It must mean that something in him which should be awake is dormant; or, yet worse, that something in him which should be in faultless tune, as the Creator tempered it, is all unstrung; something that should be nobly free to love and to adore is being repressed, "held down." Then

only does man fully think aright when he *is* aright. Then only is he aright when he, made by and for the Eternal Holy One, rests willingly in Him, and lives for Him. "The fear of the Lord is," in the strictest fact, "the beginning of wisdom"; for it is that attitude of man without which the creature cannot "answer the idea" of the Creator, and therefore cannot truly follow out the law of its own being.

"Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Him" (Jer. ix. 24) who necessarily and eternally transcends our cognition and comprehension, yet can be known, can be touched, clasped, adored, as personal, eternal, almighty, holy Love.

CHAPTER V

MAN GIVEN UP TO HIS OWN WAY: THE HEATHEN

ROMANS i. 24-32

Ver. 24. **Wherefore God gave them up, in the desires of their hearts, to uncleanness, so as to dishonour their bodies among themselves.**

There is a dark sequence, in the logic of facts, between unworthy thoughts of God and the development of the basest forms of human wrong. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God :—they are corrupt, and have done abominable works" (Psal. xiv. 1). And the folly which does not indeed deny God but degrades His Idea, always gives its sure contribution to such corruption. It is so in the nature of the case. The individual atheist, or polytheist, may conceivably be a virtuous person, on the human standard; but if he is so it is not because of his creed. Let his creed become a real formative power in human society, and it will tend inevitably to moral disease and death. Is man indeed a moral personality, made in the image of a holy and almighty Maker? Then the vital air of his moral life must be fidelity, correspondence, to his God. Let man think of Him as less than All, and he will think of himself less worthily; not less proudly perhaps, but less worthily, because not in his true and wonderful relation to the Eternal Good. Wrong in himself will tend surely

to seem less awful, and right less necessary and great. And nothing, literally nothing, from any region higher than himself—himself already lowered in his own thought from his true idea—can ever come in to supply the blank where God should be, but is not. Man may worship himself, or may despise himself, when he has ceased to "glorify God and thank Him"; but he cannot for one hour be what he was made to be, the son of God in the universe of God. To know God indeed is to be secured from self-worship, and to be taught self-reverence; and it is the only way to those two secrets in their pure fulness.

"*God gave them up.*" So the Scripture says elsewhere. "So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts" (Psal. lxxxi. 12); "God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven" (Acts vii. 42); "God gave them up to passions of degradation"; "God gave them over to an abandoned mind"; (below, verses 26, 28). It is a dire thought; but the inmost conscience, once awake, affirms the righteousness of the thing. From one point of view it is just the working out of a natural process, in which sin is at once exposed and punished by its proper results, without the slightest injection, so to speak, of any force beyond its own terrible gravitation towards the sinner's misery. But from another point it is the personally allotted, and personally inflicted, retribution of Him who hates iniquity with the antagonism of infinite Personality. *He* has so constituted natural process that wrong gravitates to wretchedness; and *He* is in that process, and above it, always and for ever.

So He "*gave them up, in their desires of their hearts*"; He left them there where they had placed themselves "in" the fatal region of self-will, self-indulgence; "gave

uncleanness," described now with terrible explicitness in its full outcome, "*to dishonour their bodies*," the intended temples of the Creator's presence, "*among themselves*," or "*in themselves*"; for the possible dishonour might be done either in a foul solitude, or in a fouler society and mutuality: **Seeing that they perverted the**

Ver. 25. **truth of God**, the eternal fact of His glory and claim, **in their** (τῷ) **lie**, so that it was travestied, misrepresented, lost, "in" the falsehood of polytheism and idols; **and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.** He casts this strong Doxology into the thick air of false worship and foul life, as if to clear it with its holy reverberation. For he is writing no mere discussion, no lecture on the genesis and evolution of paganism. It is the story of a vast rebellion, told by one who, once himself a rebel, is now altogether and for ever the absolute vassal of the King whom he has "seen in His beauty," and whom it is his joy to bless, and to claim blessing for Him from His whole world for ever.

As if animated by the word of benediction, he returns to denounce "the abominable thing which God

Ver. 26. hateth" with still more terrible explicitness. **For this reason**, because of their preference of the worse to the infinite Good, **God gave them up to passions of degradation**; He handed them over, self-bound, to the helpless slavery of lust; to "*passions*," eloquent word, which indicates how the man who *will* have his own way is all the while a "sufferer," though by his own fault; *the victim* of a mastery which he has conjured from the deep of sin.

Shall we shun to read, to render, the words which follow? We will not comment and expound. May the presence of God in our hearts, hearts otherwise as

vulnerable as those of the old pagan sinners, sweep from the springs of thought and will all horrible curiosity. But if it does so it will leave us the more able, in humility, in tears, in fear, to hear the facts of this stern indictment. It will bid us listen as those who are not sitting in judgment on paganism, but standing beside the accused and sentenced, to confess that we too share the fall, and stand, if we stand, by grace alone. Aye, and we shall remember that if an Apostle thus tore the rags from the spots of the Black Death of ancient morals, he would have been even less merciful, if possible, over the like symptoms lurking still in modern Christendom, and found sometimes upon its surface.

Terrible, indeed, is the prosaic coolness with which vices now called unnameable are named and narrated in classical literature; and we ask in vain for one of even the noblest of the pagan moralists who has spoken of such sins with anything like adequate horror. Such speech, and such silence, has been almost impossible since the Gospel was felt in civilization. "Paganism," says Dr F. W. Farrar, in a powerful passage,* with this paragraph of Romans in his view, "is protected from complete exposure by the enormity of its own vices. To shew the divine reformation wrought by Christianity it must suffice that once for all the Apostle of the Gentiles seized heathenism by the hair, and branded indelibly on her forehead the stigma of her shame." Yet the vices of the old time are not altogether an antiquarian's wonder. Now as truly as then man is awfully accessible to the worst solicitations the moment he trusts himself away from God. And this needs indeed to be remembered in a stage of thought and of society whose

* *Darkness and Dawn*, p. 112.

cynicism, and whose materialism, show gloomy signs of likeness to those last days of the old degenerate world in which St Paul looked round him, and spoke out the things he saw.

For their females perverted the natural use to the unnatural. So too the males, leaving the natural use
Ver. 27. of the female, burst out aflame in their craving towards one another, males in males working out their unseemliness—and duly getting (ἀπολαμβάνοντες) in themselves that recompense of their error which was owed them.

And as they did not approve of keeping God in their
Ver. 28. moral knowledge,* God gave them up to an abandoned mind, "*a reprobate, God-rejected, mind*"; meeting their *disapprobation* with His just and fatal *reprobation* (δοκιμάζειν, ἀδόκιμος). That *mind*, taking the false premisses of the Tempter, and reasoning from them to establish the autocracy of self, led with terrible certainty and success through evil thinking to evil doing; to do the deeds which are not becoming, to *expose* the being made for God, in a naked and foul *unseemliness*, to its friends and its foes; filled full of all un-
Ver. 29. righteousness, wickedness, viciousness, greed; brimming with envy, murder, guile, ill-nature;
Ver 30. whisperers, defamers, repulsive to God, outragers, prideful, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, senseless, faithless, loveless, truceless, piti-
Ver. 31. less; people who (οἵτινες) morally aware of (ἐπιγνόντες) God's ordinance, that they who practise such things are worthy of death, not only do them, but assent and consent with those who practise them.

* So we venture here to render ἐπίγνωσιν, a knowledge deeper than that of merely logical conclusion.

Here is a terrible accusation of human life, and of the human heart; the more terrible because it is plainly meant to be, in a certain sense, inclusive, universal. We are not indeed compelled to think that the Apostle charges every human being with sins against nature, as if the whole earth were actually one vast City of the Plain. We need not take him to mean that every descendant of Adam is actually an undutiful child, or actually untrustworthy in a compact, or even actually a boaster, an *ἀλαζὼν*, a pretentious claimant of praise or credit which he knows he does not deserve. We may be sure that on the whole, in this lurid passage, charged less with condemnation than with "lamentation, and mourning, and woe," he is thinking mainly of the then state of heathen society in its worst developments. Yet we shall see, as the Epistle goes on, that all the while he is thinking not only of the sins of some men, but of the sin of man. He describes with this tremendous particularity the variegated symptoms of one disease—the corruption of man's heart; a disease everywhere present, everywhere deadly; limited in its manifestations by many circumstances and conditions, outward or within the man, but *in itself* quite unlimited in its dreadful possibilities. What man is, as fallen, corrupted, gone from God, is shewn, in the teaching of St Paul, by what bad men are.

Do we rebel against the inference? Quite possibly we do. Almost for certain, at one time or another, we have done so. We look round us on one estimable life and another, which we cannot reasonably think of as regenerate, if we take the strict Scriptural tests of regeneration into account, yet which asks and wins our respect, our confidence, it may be even our admiration; and we say, openly or tacitly, consciously or uncon-

sciously, that *that* life stands clear outside this first chapter of Romans. Well, be it so in our thoughts; and let nothing, no nothing, make us otherwise than ready to recognize and honour right doing wherever we see it, alike in the saints of God and in those who deny His very Being. But just now let us withdraw from all such looks outward, and calmly and in a silent hour look in. Do we, do you, do I, stand outside this chapter? Are we definitely prepared to say that the heart which we carry in our breast, whatever our friend's heart may be, is such that under no change of circumstances could it, being what it is, conceivably develop the forms of evil branded in this passage? Ah, who, that knows himself, does not know that there lies in him indefinitely more than he can know of possible evil? "Who can understand his errors?" Who has so encountered temptation in all its typical forms that he can say, with even approximate truth, that he knows his own strength, and his own weakness, exactly as they are?

It was not for nothing that the question was discussed of old, whether there was any man who would always be virtuous if he were given the ring of Gyges, and the power to be invisible to all eyes. Nor was it lightly, or as a piece of pious rhetoric, that the saintliest of the chiefs of our Reformation, seeing a murderer carried off to die, exclaimed that there went John Bradford but for the grace of God. It is just when a man is nearest God for himself that he sees what, but for God, he would be; what, taken apart from God, he is, potentially if not in act. And it is in just such a mood that, reading this paragraph of the great Epistle, he will smite upon his breast, and say, "God, be merciful to me the sinner" (Luke xviii. 13).

So doing he will be meeting the very purpose of the Writer of this passage. St Paul is full of the message of peace, holiness, and the Spirit. He is intent and eager to bring his reader into sight and possession of the fulness of the eternal mercy, revealed and secured in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Sacrifice and Life. But for this very purpose he labours first to expose man to himself; to awaken him to the fact that he is before everything else a sinner; to reverse the Tempter's spell, and to let him see the fact of his guilt with open eyes.

"The Gospel," some one has said, "can never be proved except to a bad conscience." If "bad" means "awakened," the saying is profoundly true. With a conscience sound asleep we may discuss Christianity, whether to condemn it, or to applaud. We may see in it an elevating programme for the race. We may affirm, a thousand times, that from the creed that God became flesh there result boundless possibilities for Humanity. But the Gospel, "the power of God unto salvation," will hardly be seen in its own prevailing self-evidence, as it is presented in this wonderful Epistle, till the student is first and with all else a penitent. The man must know for himself something of sin as condemnable guilt, and something of self as a thing in helpless yet responsible bondage, before he can so see Christ given for us, and risen for us, and seated at the right hand of God for us, as to say, "There is now no condemnation; Who shall separate us from the love of God? I know whom I have believed."

To the full sight of Christ there needs a true sight of self, that is to say, of sin.

CHAPTER VI

HUMAN GUILT UNIVERSAL: HE APPROACHES THE CONSCIENCE OF THE JEW

ROMANS ii. 1-17

WE have appealed, for affirmation of St Paul's tremendous exposure of human sin, to a solemn and deliberate self-scrutiny, asking the man who doubts the justice of the picture to give up for the present any instinctive wish to vindicate other men, while he thinks a little while solely of himself. But another and opposite class of mistake has to be reckoned with, and precluded; the tendency of man to a facile condemnation of others, in favour of himself; "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are" (Luke xviii. 11). It is now, as it was of old, only too possible to read, or to hear, the most searching and also the most sweeping condemnation of human sin, and to feel a sort of fallacious moral sympathy with the sentence, a phantom as it were of righteous indignation against the wrong and the doers of it, and yet wholly to mistake the matter by thinking that the hearer is righteous though the world is wicked. The man listens as if he were allowed a seat beside the Judge's chair, as if he were an esteemed assessor of the Court, and could listen with a grave yet untroubled approbation to the discourse preliminary to the sentence. Ah, he is an

assessor of the accused; he is an accomplice of his fallen fellows; he is a poor guilty man himself. Let him awake to himself, and to his sin, in time.

With such a reader or hearer in view St Paul proceeds. We need not suppose that he writes as if such states of mind were to be expected in the Roman mission; though it was quite possible that this might be the attitude of some who bore the Christian name at Rome. More probably he speaks as it were in the presence of the Christians to persons whom at any moment any of them might meet, and particularly to that large element in religious life at Rome, the unconverted Jews. True, they would not read the Epistle; but he could arm those who would read it against their cavils and refusals, and show them how to reach the conscience even of the Pharisee of the Dispersion. He could show them how to seek his soul, by shaking him from his dream of sympathy with the Judge who all the while was about to sentence *him*.

It is plain that throughout the passage now before us the Apostle has the Jew in view. He does not name him for a long while. He says many things which are as much for the Gentile sinner as for him. He dwells upon the universality of guilt as indicated by the universality of conscience; a passage of awful import for every human soul, quite apart from its place in the argument here. But all the while he keeps in view the case of the self-constituted *judge* of other men, the man who affects to be essentially better than they, to be, at least by comparison with them, good friends with the law of God. And the undertone of the whole passage is a warning to this man that his brighter light will prove his greater ruin if he does not use it; nay, that

he has not used it, and that so it is his ruin already, the ruin of his claim to judge, to stand exempt, to have nothing to do with the criminal crowd at the bar.

All this points straight at the Jewish conscience, though the arrow is levelled from a covert. If that conscience might but be reached! He longs to reach it, first for the unbeliever's own sake, that he might be led through the narrow pass of self-condemnation into the glorious freedom of faith and love. But also it was of first importance that the spiritual pride of the Jews should be conquered, or at least exposed, for the sake of the mission-converts already won. The first Christians, newly brought from paganism, must have regarded Jewish opinion with great attention and deference. Not only were their apostolic teachers Jews, and the Scriptures of the Prophets, to which those teachers always pointed, Jewish; but the weary Roman world of late years had been disposed to own with more and more distinctness that if there were such a thing as a true voice from heaven to man it was to be heard among that unattractive yet impressive race which was seen everywhere, and yet refused to be "reckoned among the nations." The Gospels and the Acts show us instances enough of educated Romans drawn towards Israel and the covenant; and abundant parallels are given us by the secular historians and satirists. The Jews, in the words of Professor Gwatkin, were "the recognized non-conformists" of the Roman world. At this very time the Emperor was the enamoured slave of a brilliant woman who was known to be proselyted to the Jewish creed. It was no slight trial to converts in their spiritual infancy to meet everywhere the question why the sages of Jerusalem had slain this Jewish Prophet, Jesus, and why

everywhere the synagogues denounced His name and His disciples. The true answer would be better understood if the bigot himself could be brought to say, "God, be merciful to me the sinner."

Ver. 1. Wherefore you are without excuse, O man, every man who judges; when you judge the other party you pass judgment on yourself; for you practise the same things, you who judge. For * we

Ver. 2. know—this is a granted point between us—that God's judgment is truth-wise, is a reality, in awful earnest, upon those who practise such things.

Ver. 3. Now is this your calculation, O man, you who judge those who practise such things, and do them yourself, that you will escape God's judgment? Do you surmise that some by-way of privilege and indulgence will be kept open for you? Or do you

Ver. 4. despise the wealth of His kindness, and of His forbearance and longsuffering—despise it, by mistaking it for mere indulgence, or indifference—knowing not that God's kind ways (*τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ*) lead

Ver. 5. you to repentance? No, true to (*κατὰ*) your own hardness, your own unrepentant heart, you are hoarding for yourself a wrath which will be felt in the day of wrath, the day of disclosure of the righteous

Ver. 6. judgment of God, who will requite each individual according to his works. What will be that requital, and its law? To those who, on the line of

Ver. 7. (*κατὰ*) perseverance in good work, seek, as their point of gravitation, glory, and honour, and

Ver. 8. immortality, He will requite life eternal. But for those who side with (*τοῖς ἐκ*) strife, who take part with man, with self, with sin, against the claims

* Reading *γάρ*.

and grace of God, and, while they disobey the truth of conscience, obey unrighteousness, yielding the will to wrong, there shall be wrath and fierce anger, trouble
Ver. 9. and bewilderment, inflicted on every soul of man, man working out what is evil, alike Jew—Jew
Ver. 10. first—and Greek. But glory, and honour, and peace shall be for every one who works what is
Ver. 11. good, alike for Jew—Jew first—and Greek. For there is no favouritism in God's court.

Here he actually touches the Jew. He has named him twice, and in both places recognizes that primacy which in the history of Redemption is really his. It is the primacy of the race chosen to be the organ of revelation and the birth-place of Incarnate God. It was given sovereignly, "not according to the works," or to the numbers, of the nation, but according to unknown conditions in the mind of God. It carried with it genuine and splendid advantages. It even gave the individual righteous Jew (so surely the language of ver. 10 implies) a certain special welcome to his Master's "Well done, good and faithful"; not to the disadvantage, in the least degree, of the individual righteous "Greek," but just such as may be illustrated in a circle of ardent and impartial friendship, where, in one instance or another, kinship added to friendship makes attachment not more intimate but more interesting. Yes, the Jew has indeed his priority, his primacy, limited and qualified in many directions, but real and permanent in its place; this Epistle (see ch. xi.) is the great Charter of it in the Christian Scriptures. But whatever the place of it is, it has no place whatever in the question of the sinfulness of sin, unless indeed to make guilt deeper where light has been greater. The Jew has a great historical position

in the plan of God. He has been accorded as it were an official nearness to God in the working out of the world's redemption. But he is not one whit the less for this a poor sinner, fallen and guilty. He is not one moment for this to excuse, but all the more to condemn, himself. He is the last person in the world to judge others. Wherever God has placed him in history, he is to place himself, in repentance and faith, least and lowest at the foot of Messiah's Cross.

What was and is true of the chosen Nation is now and for ever true, by a deep moral parity, of all communities and of all persons who are in any sense privileged, advantaged by circumstance. It is true, solemnly and formidably true, of the Christian Church, and of the Christian family, and of the Christian man. Later in this second chapter we shall be led to some reflections on Church privilege. Let us reflect here, if but in passing, on the fact that privilege of other kinds must stand utterly aside when it is a question of man's sin. Have we no temptation to forget this? Probably we are not of the mind of the Frenchman of the old *régime* who thought that "the Almighty would hesitate before He condemned for ever a man of a marquis' condition." But are we quite clear on the point that the Eternal Judge will admit no influences from other sides? The member of so excellent, so useful, a family, with many traces of the family character about him! The relative of saints, the companion of the good! A mind so full of practical energy, of literary grace and skill; so capable of deep and subtle thought, of generous words, and even deeds; so charming, so entertaining, so informing; the man of culture, the man of genius;—shall none of these things weigh in the balance, and mingle some benignant favouritism with the question,

Has he done the will of God? Nay, "*there is no favouritism in God's court!*" No one is acquitted there for his reputable connexions, or for his possession of personal "talents" (awful word in the light of its first use!), given him only that he might the better "occupy" for his Lord. These things have nothing to do with that dread thing, the Law, which has everything to do with the accusation and the award.

Before we pass to another section of the passage, let us not forget the grave fact that here, in these opening pages of this great Treatise on gratuitous Salvation, this Epistle which is about to unfold to us the divine paradox of the Justification of the Ungodly, we find this overwhelming emphasis laid upon "*perseverance in good work.*" True, we are not to allow even it to confuse the grand simplicity of the Gospel, which is to be soon explained. We are not to let ourselves think, for example, that ver. 7 depicts a man deliberately aiming through a life of merit at a *quid pro quo* at length in heaven; so much glory, honour, and immortality for so living as it would be sin not to live. St Paul does not write to contradict the Parable of the Unprofitable Servant (Luke xvii.), any more than to negative beforehand his own reasoning in the fourth chapter below. The case he contemplates is one only to be realized where man has cast himself, without one plea of merit, at the feet of mercy, and then rises up to a walk and work of willing loyalty, covetous of the "Well done, good and faithful," at its close, not because he is ambitious for himself, but because he is devoted to his God, and to His will. And St Paul knows, and in due time will tell us, that for the loyalty that serves, as well as for the repentance that first submits, the man has to thank mercy, and mercy only, first, midst, and last: "It is not of him

that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that pitieth" (ix. 16). But then, none the less, he does lay this emphasis, this indescribable stress, upon the "perseverance in good work," as the actual march of the pilgrim who travels heavenward. True to the genius of Scripture, that is to the mind of its Inspirer in His utterances to man, he isolates a main truth for the time, and leaves us alone with it. Justification will come in order. But, that it may do precisely this, that it may come in order and not out of it, he bids us first consider right, wrong, judgment, and retribution, as if there were nothing else in the moral universe. He leads us to the fact of the permanence of the results of the soul's actions. He warns us that God is eternally in earnest when He promises and when He threatens; that He will see to it that time leaves its retributive impress for ever on eternity.

The whole passage, read by a soul awake to itself, and to the holiness of the Judge of men, will contribute from its every sentence something to our conviction, our repentance, our dread of self, our persuasion that somehow from the judgment we must fly to the Judge. But this is not to be unfolded yet.

It was, I believe, a precept of John Wesley's to his evangelists, in unfolding their message, to speak first in general of the love of God to man; then, with all possible energy, and so as to search conscience to its depths, to preach the law of holiness; and then, and not till then, to uplift the glories of the Gospel of pardon, and of life. Intentionally or not, his directions follow the lines of the Epistle to the Romans.

But the Apostle has by no means done with the Jew, and his hopes of heaven by pedigree and by creed. He recurs to the impartiality of "*that day*," the coming

final crisis of human history, ever present to his soul. He dwells now almost wholly on the impartiality of *its severity*, still bearing on the Pharisee's dream that somehow the Law will be his friend, for Abraham's and Moses' sake.

Ver. 12. **For all who sinned** (or, in English idiom, **all who have sinned, all who shall have sinned**) **not law-wise, even so, not law-wise, shall perish,** shall lose the soul; **and all who in** (or let us paraphrase, **under**) **law have sinned, by law shall be judged,** that is to say, practically, **condemned,** found guilty. **For not law's hearers are just in God's court; nay, law's doers shall be justified;** for "law" is never for a moment satisfied with applause, with approbation; it demands always and inexorably obedience. **For whenever** (the) **Nations,** Nations **not having law, by nature**—as distinct from express precept—**do the things of the Law,** when they act on the principles of it, observing in any measure the eternal difference of right and wrong, these men, though **not having law, are to themselves law;** shewing as they do (οἵτινες)—to one another, in moral intercourse—**the work of the Law,** that which is, as a fact, its *result* where it is heard, a sense of the dread claims of right, written **in their hearts,** present to the intuitions of their nature; **while** their conscience, their sense of violated right, **bears concurrent witness,** each conscience "concurring" with all; **and** while, **between each other,** in the interchanges of thought and discourse, **their reasonings accuse, or it may be defend,** their actions; now in conversation, now in treatise or philosophic dialogue. And all this makes one vast phenomenon, pregnant with lessons of accountability, and ominous of a **judgment coming; in the day when God shall judge**

the secret things of men, even the secrets hid beneath
Ver. 16. the solemn robe of the formalist, according to my Gospel,* by means of Jesus Christ, to whom the Father "hath committed all judgment, as He is the Son of Man" (John v. 27). So he closes another solemn cadence with the blessed Name. It has its special weight and fitness here; it was the name trampled by the Pharisee, yet the name of Him who was to judge him in the great day.

The main import of the paragraph is plain. It is, to enforce the fact of the accountability of the Jew and the Greek alike, from the point of view of Law. The Jew, who is primarily in the Apostle's thought, is reminded that his possession of *the* Law, that is to say of the one *specially revealed* code not only of ritual but far more of moral†, is no recommendatory privilege, but a sacred responsibility. The Gentile meanwhile is shewn, in passing but with gravest purpose, to be by no means exempted from accountability simply for his lack of a revealed preceptive code. He possesses, as man, that moral consciousness without which the revealed code itself would be futile, for it would correspond to nothing. Made in the image of God, he has the mysterious sense

* Here, perhaps, for once, the word εὐαγγέλιον is used in an extended and "improper" sense, to denote the whole message *connected with* the Glad Tidings, and so now the warning of judgment to come, which gives to the Glad Tidings its sacred urgency.

† Manifestly "*the* Law" in this passage means not the ceremonial law of Israel, but the revealed moral law given to Israel, above all in the Decalogue. This appears from the language of ver. 15, which would be meaningless if the reference were to special ordinances of worship. The Gentiles could not "shew the work of" *that* kind of "law written in their hearts"; what they shewed was, as we have explained, a "work" related to the revealed claims of God and man on the will and life.

which sees, feels, handles moral obligation. He is aware of the fact of duty. Not living up to what he is thus aware of, he is guilty.

Implicitly, all through the passage, human failure is taught side by side with human responsibility. Such a clause as that of ver. 14, "*when they do by nature the things of the law*," is certainly not to be pressed, *in such a context as this*, to be an assertion that pagan morality ever actually satisfies the holy tests of the eternal Judge. Read in the whole connexion, it only asserts that the pagan acts as a moral being; that he knows what it is to obey, and to resist, the sense of duty. This is not to say, what we shall soon hear St Paul so solemnly deny, that there exists anywhere a man whose correspondence of life to moral law is such that his "mouth" needs *not* to "be stopped," and that he is *not* to take his place as one of a "world guilty before God."

Stern, solemn, merciful argument! Now from this side, now from that, it approaches the conscience of man, made for God and fallen from God. It strips the veil from his gross iniquities; it lets in the sun of holiness upon his iniquities of the more religious type; it speaks in his dull ears the words judgment, day, tribulation, wrath, bewilderment, perishing. But it does all this that man, convicted, may ask in earnest what he shall do with conscience and his Judge, and may discover with joy that his Judge Himself has "found a ransom," and stands Himself in act to set him free.

CHAPTER VII

JEWISH RESPONSIBILITY AND GUILT

ROMANS ii. 17-29

"*THE Jew, first, and also the Greek*"; this has been the burthen of the Apostle's thought thus far upon the whole. He has had the Jew for some while in his chief thought, but he has recurred again and again in passing to the Gentile. Now he faces the Pharisee explicitly and on open ground, before he passes from this long exposure of human sin to the revelation of the glorious Remedy.

Ver. 17. But if* you, you emphatically, the reader or hearer now in view, you who perhaps have excused yourself from considering your own case by this last mention of the responsibility of the non-Jewish world; if you bear the name of Jew, whether or no you possess the corresponding spiritual reality; and repose yourself upon the Law, as if the possession of that awful revelation of duty was your protection, not your sentence; and glory in God, as if He were your private property, the decoration of your national position,

Ver. 18. whereas the knowledge of Him is given you in trust for the world; and know the Will, His Will, *the* Will supreme; and put the touchstone to things

* There is no practical doubt that *εἰ δὲ* not *ἴδε* ("*Behold*") is the right reading here.

which differ, like a casuist skilled in moral problems; schooled out of the Law, under continuous training (so the Greek present participle bids us explain) by principles and precepts which the Law supplies;—(if)

Ver. 19. you are sure that you, yourself, whoever else, are a leader of blind men, a light of those who are

Ver. 20. in the dark, an educator of the thoughtless, a teacher of beginners, possessing, in the Law, the outline,* the system, of real knowledge and truth,† (the outline indeed, but not the power and life related to it):—if this is your estimate of your position and capacities, I turn it upon yourself. Think, and answer—

Ver. 21. You therefore, your neighbour's teacher, do you not teach yourself? You, who proclaim, Thou

Ver. 22. shalt not steal, do you steal? You, who say, Thou shalt not commit adultery, do you commit it? You, who abominate the idols, affecting to loathe their very neigbourhood, do you plunder temples, entering the polluted precincts readily enough for

Ver. 23. purposes at least equally polluting? You who glory in the Law, as the palladium of your

Ver. 24. race, do you, by your violation of the Law, disgrace your‡ God? "For the name of our God

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* Μόρφωσις: we need not understand by this word a reference to *mere formalism*. Μορφή on the contrary regularly means shape expressive of underlying substance. And μόρφωσις means not shape but shaping. He means that the Pharisee really *has*, in the Law, God's formed and formative model of knowledge and reality. Still, 2 Tim. iii. 5 justifies our also seeing here a side suggestion of the possibility of dissociating even the divine model from the corresponding "power."

† Τῆς γνώσεως, τῆς ἀληθείας:—the adjective "*real*" in our rendering represents the Greek definite article, though with a slight exaggeration.

‡ Τὸν Θεόν. We represent the definite article here by "*your*," and just below by "*our*"; not without hesitation, as it somewhat exaggerates the definition.

is, because of you, railed at among the heathen," as it stands written, in Ezekiel's message (xxxvi. 20) to the ungodly Israel of the ancient Dispersion—a message true of the Dispersion of the later day.

We need not overstrain the emphasis of the Apostle's stern invective. Not every non-Christian Jew of the first century, certainly, was an adulterer, a thief, a plunderer. When a few years later (Acts xxviii. 17) St Paul gathered round him the Jews of Rome, and spent a long day in discussing the prophecies with them, he appealed to them with a noble frankness which in some sense evidently expected a response in kind. But it is certain that the Jews of the Roman Dispersion bore a poor general character for truth and honour. And anywise St Paul knew well that there is a deeply natural connexion between unhallowed religious bigotry and that innermost failure of self-control which leaves man only too open to the worst temptations. Whatever feeds gross personal pride promotes a swift and deadly decay of moral fibre. Did this man pride himself on Abraham's blood, and his own Rabbinic lore and skill, and scorn both the Gentile "sinner" and the *'am-hââretz*, "the people of the land," the rank and file of his own race? Then he was the very man to be led helpless by the Tempter. As a fact, there are maxims of the later Rabbinism, which represent beyond reasonable doubt the spirit if not the letter of the worst watchwords of "the circumcision" of St Paul's time: "Circumcision is equivalent to all the commandments of the Law"; "To live in Palestine is equal to the Commandments"; "He that hath his abode in Palestine is sure of life eternal."* The man who could even for

* See A. M'Caul's *Old Paths* (נתיבות עולם), p. 230, etc.

an hour entertain such a creed was ready (however deep below his consciousness the readiness lay) for anything—under fitting circumstances of temptation.

So it is now, very far beyond the limits of the Jewish Dispersion of our time. Now as then, and for the Christian "outwardly" as for the Jew "outwardly," there is no surer path to spiritual degeneracy than spiritual pride. What are the watch-words which have succeeded to those of the Rabbinists who encountered St Paul? Are they words, or thoughts, of self-applause because of the historic orthodoxy of your creed? Because of the Scriptural purity of your theory of salvation? Because of the illustrious annals of your national Church, older than the nation which it has so largely welded and developed? Because of the patient courage, under contempt and exclusion, of the community which some call your denomination, your sect, but which is to you indeed your Church? Because of your loyalty to order? Because of your loyalty to liberty? Take heed. The best, corrupted, becomes inevitably the worst. In religion, there is only one altogether safe "glorying." It is when the man can say from the soul, with open eyes, and therefore with a deeply humbled heart, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). All other "glorying is not good." Be thankful for every genuine privilege. But for Christ's sake, and for your own soul's sake, do not, even in the inmost secret of your soul, "value *yourself*" upon them. It is disease, it is disaster, to do so.

And shall not we of the Christian Dispersion take home also what Ezekiel and St Paul say about the

blasphemies, the miserable railings at our God, caused by the sins of those who bear His Name? Who does not know that, in every region of heathendom, the missionary's plea for Christ is always best listened to where the pagan, or the Mussulman, has *not* before his eyes the Christianity of "treaty-ports," and other places where European life is to be seen lived without restraint? The stumbling-block may be the drunken sailor, or the unchaste merchant, or civilian, or soldier, or traveller. Or it may be just the man who, belonging to a race reputed Christian, merely ignores the Christian's holy Book, and Day, and House, and avoids all semblance of fellowship with his countrymen who have come to live beside him that they may preach Christ where He is not known. Or it may be the government, reputed Christian, which, amidst all its noble benefits to the vast races it holds in sway, allows them to know, to think, at least to suspect, that there are cases where it cares more for revenue than for righteousness. In all these cases the Christian Dispersion gives occasion for railing at the Christian's God: and the reckoning will be a grave matter "in that Day."

But shall the Christians of the Christendom at home stand exempt from the charge? Ah let us who name the blessed Name with even the least emphasis of faith and loyalty, dwelling amongst the masses who only passively, so to speak, are Christian, who "profess nothing," though they are, or are supposed to be, baptized—let us, amidst "the world" which understands not a little of what we ought to be, and watches us so keenly, and so legitimately —let us take home this message, sent first to the old inconsistent Israel. Do we, professing godliness, shew the mind of Christ in our secular intercourse? Do we, on the whole, give the average "world" cause to expect that

"a Christian," as such, is a man to trust in business, in friendship? Is the conviction quietly forced upon them that a Christian's temper, and tongue, are not as other men's? That the Christian minister habitually lives high above self-seeking? That the Christian tradesman faithfully remembers his customers' just interests, and is true in all his dealings? That the Christian servant, and the Christian master, are alike exceptionally mindful of each other's rights, and facile about their own? That the Christian's time, and his money, are to a remarkable degree applied to the good of others, for Christ's sake? This is what the members of the Christian Society, in the inner sense of the word Christian, are expected to be in what we all understand by "the world." If they are so, God be thanked. If they are not so—who shall weigh the guilt? Who shall adequately estimate the dishonour so done to the blessed Name? And "the Day" is coming.

But he has more to say about the position of the Jew. He would not even seem to forget the greatness of the God-given privilege of Israel; and he will use that privilege once more as a cry to conscience.

Ver. 25. **For circumcision indeed profits you, if you carry law into practice**; in that case circumcision is for you God's seal upon God's own promises to the true sons of Abraham's blood *and faith*. Are you indeed a practiser of the holy Code whose summary and essence is love to God and love to man? Can you look your Lord in the face and say—not, "I have satisfied all Thy demands; pay me that Thou owest," but, "Thou knowest that I love Thee, and therefore oh how I love Thy law"? Then you are indeed a child of the covenant, through His grace; and the seal of the covenant speaks to you the certainties of its blessing. **But if you are a transgressor**

of law, your circumcision is turned uncircumcision; the divine seal is to you nothing, for you are not the rightful holder of the deed of covenant which it seals. **If**

Ver. 26. **therefore the uncircumcision**, the Gentile world, in some individual instance, **carefully keeps the ordinances of the Law**, reverently remembers the love owed to God and to man, **shall not his uncircumcision**, the uncircumcision of the man supposed, **be counted as if circumcision?** Shall he not be treated as a lawful recipient of covenant blessings even though *the seal* upon the document of promise is, not at all by his fault,

Ver. 27. missing? **And thus shall not this hereditary** (ἐκ φύσεως) **uncircumcision**, this Gentile born and bred, **fulfilling the law of love and duty, judge you, who by means of letter and circumcision are—law's transgressor**, using as you practically do use the terms, the letter, of the covenant, and the rite which is its seal, as means to violate its inmost import, and claiming, in the pride of privilege, blessings promised only to self-forgetting love?

Ver. 27. **For not the (Jew) in the visible sphere is a Jew**; **nor is circumcision in the visible sphere, in the flesh, circumcision. No, but the Jew in the hidden sphere;**

Ver. 29. **and circumcision of heart, in Spirit, not letter**; circumcision in the sense of a work on the soul, wrought by God's Spirit, not in that of a legal claim supposed to rest upon a routine of prescribed observances. **His praise**, the praise of such a Jew, the Jew in this hidden sense, thus circumcised in heart, **does not come from men, but does come from God.** Men may, and very likely will, give him anything but praise; they will not like him the better for his deep divergence from their standard, and from their spirit. But the Lord knows him, and loves him, and prepares for him His own welcome; "Well done, good and faithful."

Here is a passage far-reaching, like the paragraphs which have gone before it. Its immediate bearing needs only brief comment, certainly brief explanation. We need do little more than wonder at the moral miracle of words like these written by one who, a few years before, was spending the whole energy of his mighty will upon the defence of ultra-Judaism. The miracle resides not only in the vastness of the man's change of view, but in the manner of it. It is not only that he denounces Pharisaism, but he denounces it in a tone entirely free from its spirit, which he might easily have carried into the opposite camp. What he meets it with is the assertion of truths as pure and peaceable as they are eternal; the truths of the supreme and ultimate importance of the right attitude of man's heart towards God, and of the inexorable connexion between such an attitude and a life of unselfish love towards man. Here is one great instance of that large spiritual phenomenon, the transfiguration of the first followers of the Lord Jesus from what they had been to what under His risen power they became. We see in them men whose convictions and hopes have undergone an incalculable revolution; yet it is a revolution which disorders nothing. Rather, it has taken fanaticism for ever out of their thoughts and purposes. It has softened their whole souls towards man, as well as drawn them into an unimagined intimacy with God. It has taught them to live above the world; yet it has brought them into the most practical and affectionate relations with every claim upon them in the world around them. "Your life is hid with Christ in God"; "Honour all men"; "He that loveth not, knoweth not God."

But the significance of this particular passage is indeed far-reaching, permanent, universal. As before,

so here, the Apostle warns us (not only the Jew of that distant day) against the fatal but easy error of perverting privilege into pride, forgetting that every gift of God is "a talent" with which the man is to trade for his Lord, and for his Lord alone. But also, more explicitly here, he warns us against that subtle tendency of man's heart to substitute, in religion, the outward for the inward, the mechanical for the spiritual, the symbol for the thing. Who can read this passage without reflections on the privileges, and on the seals of membership, of the Christian Church? Who may not take from it a warning not to put in the wrong place the sacred gifts, as sacred as they can be, because divine, of Order, and of Sacrament? Here is a great Hebrew doctor dealing with that primary Sacrament of the Elder Church of which such high and urgent things are said in the Hebrew Scriptures; a rite of which even medieval theologians have asserted that it was the Sacrament of the same grace as that which is the grace of Baptism now.* But when he has to consider the case of one who has received the physical ordinance apart from the right attitude of soul, he speaks of the ordinance in terms which a hasty reader might think slighting. He does not slight it He says it "profits," and he is going soon to say more to that purpose. For him it is nothing less than God's own Seal on God's own Word, assuring the individual, as with a literal touch divine, that all is true *for him*, as he claims grace in humble faith. But then he contemplates the case of one who, by no contempt but by force of circumstance, has never received the holy seal, yet believes, and loves, and

* So Bernard, *Sermo in Cœnâ*, c. 2.

obeys. And he lays it down that the Lord of the Covenant will honour that man's humble claim as surely as if he brought the covenant-document ready sealed in his hand. Not that even for him the seal, if it may be had, will be nothing; it will assuredly be divine still, and will be sought as God's own gift, His seal *ex post facto*. But the principle remains that the ritual seal and the spiritual reality are separable; and that the greater thing, the thing of absolute and ultimate necessity between the soul and God, is the spiritual reality; and that where that is present there God accepts.

It was the temptation of Israel of old to put Circumcision in the place of faith, love, and holiness, instead of in its right place, as the divine imperial seal upon the covenant of grace, the covenant to be claimed and used by faith. It is the temptation of some Christians now to put the sacred order of the Church, and particularly its divine Sacraments, the holy Bath and the holy Meal, in the place of spiritual regeneration, and spiritual communion, rather than in their right place as divine imperial seals on the covenant which guarantees both to faith. For us, as for our elder brethren, this paragraph of the great argument is therefore altogether to the purpose. "Faith is greater than water," says even Peter Lombard,* the *Magister* of the medieval Schools. So it is. And the thought is in perfect unison with St Paul's principle of reasoning here. Let it be ours to reverence, to prize, to use the ordinances of our Master, with a devotion such as we might seem sure we should feel if we saw HIM dip His hand in the Font, or stretch it out to break the Bread, and hallow it, and

* See *Sententiæ*, iv., iv., 3-7.

give it, at the Table. But let us be quite certain, for our own souls' warning, that it is true all the while—in the sense of this passage—that "he is not a Christian which is one outwardly, neither is that Baptism, or Communion, which is outward; but he is a Christian which is one inwardly, and Baptism and Communion are those of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter."

Sacred indeed are the God-given externals of Christian order and ordinance. But there are degrees of greatness in the world of sacred things. And the moral work of God direct upon the soul of man is greater than His sacramental work done through man's body

CHAPTER VIII

JEWISH CLAIMS: NO HOPE IN HUMAN MERIT

ROMANS iii. 1-20

AS the Apostle dictates, there rises before his mind a figure often seen by his eyes, the Rabbinic disputant. Keen, subtle, unscrupulous, at once eagerly in earnest yet ready to use any argument for victory, how often that adversary had crossed his path, in Syria, in Asia Minor, in Macedonia, in Achaia! He is present now to his consciousness, within the quiet house of Gaius; and his questions come thick and fast, following on this urgent appeal to his, alas, almost impenetrable conscience.

Ver. 1. **"What then is the advantage of the Jew? Or what is the profit of circumcision?" "If some did not believe, what of that? Will their faithlessness cancel God's good faith?" "But if our righteousness sets off God's righteousness, would God be unjust, bringing His wrath to bear?"**

We group *the questions* together thus, to make it the clearer that we do enter here, at this opening of the third chapter, upon a brief controversial dialogue; perhaps the almost verbatim record of many a dialogue actually spoken. The Jew, pressed hard with moral proofs of his responsibility, must often have turned thus upon his pursuer, or rather have tried thus to

escape from him in the subtleties of a false appeal to the faithfulness of God.

And first he meets the Apostle's stern assertion that circumcision without spiritual reality will not save. He asks, where then is the advantage of Jewish descent? What is the profit, the good, of circumcision? It is a mode of reply not unknown in discussions on Christian ordinances; "What then is the good of belonging to a historic Church at all? What do you give the divine Sacraments to do?" The Apostle answers his questioner at once; **Much**, in every way; **first**, because they were entrusted with the **Oracles of God**. "*First*," as if there were more to say in detail. Something, at least, of what is here left unsaid is said later, ix. 4, 5, where he recounts the long roll of Israel's spiritual and historical splendours; "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the law-giving, and the worship, and the promises, and the Fathers, and the Christ." Was it nothing to be bound up with things like these, in a bond made at once of blood-relationship, holy memories, and magnificent hopes? Was it nothing to be exhorted to righteousness, fidelity, and love by finding the individual life thus surrounded? But here he places "first" of even these wonderful treasures this, that Israel was "*entrusted with the Oracles of God*," the Utterances of God, His unique Message to man "through His prophets, in the Holy Scriptures." Yes, here was something which gave to the Jew an "advantage" without which the others would either have had no existence, or no significance. He was the trustee of Revelation. In his care was lodged the Book by which man was to live and die; through which he was to know immeasurably more about God and about himself than he could learn from all other informants put

Ver. 2.

together. He, his people, his Church, were the "witness and keeper of Holy Writ." And therefore to be born of Israel, and ritually entered into the covenant of Israel, was to be born into the light of revelation, and committed to the care of the witnesses and keepers of the light.

To insist upon this immense privilege is altogether to St Paul's purpose here. For it is a privilege which evidently carries an awful responsibility with it. What would be the guilt of the soul, and of the Community, to whom those Oracles were—not given as property, but *entrusted*—and who did not do the things they said?

Again the message passes on to the Israel of the Christian Church. "What advantage hath the Christian? What profit is there of Baptism?" "Much, in every way; first, because to the Church is entrusted the light of revelation." To be born in it, to be baptized in it, is to be born into the sunshine of revelation, and laid on the heart and care of the Community which witnesses to the genuineness of its Oracles and sees to their preservation and their spread. Great is the talent. Great is the accountability.

Ver. 3. But the Rabbinist goes on. **For if some did not** believe, what of that? **Will their faithlessness cancel God's good faith?** These Oracles of God promise interminable glories to Israel, to Israel as a community, a body. Shall not that promise hold good for the whole mass, though some (bold euphemism for the faithless multitudes!) have rejected the Promiser? Will not the unbelieving Jew, after all, find his way to life eternal for his company's sake, for his part and lot in the covenant community? "*Will God's faith*," His good faith, His plighted word, be reduced

to empty sounds by the bad Israelite's sin? Away with the thought,* the Apostle answers. Any thing is more possible than that God should lie. Nay (δὲ), let God prove true, and every man prove liar; as it stands written (Psal. li. 4), "That Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and mightest overcome when Thou impleadest." † He quotes the Psalmist in that deep utterance of self-accusation, where he takes part against himself, and finds himself guilty "without one plea," and, in the loyalty of the regenerate and now awakened soul, is jealous to vindicate the justice of his *condemning* God. The whole Scripture contains no more impassioned, yet no more profound and deliberate, utterance of the eternal truth that God is always in the right or He would be no God at all; that it is better, and more reasonable, to doubt anything than to doubt His righteousness, whatever cloud surrounds it, and whatever lightning bursts the cloud.

Ver. 4.

But again the caviller, intent not on God's glory but on his own position, takes up the word. But if our unrighteousness exhibits, sets off, God's righteousness, if our sin gives occasion to grace to abound, if our guilt lets the generosity of God's Way of Acceptance stand out the more wonderful by contrast —what shall we say? Would God be unjust, bringing His (τὴν) wrath to bear on us, when our pardon would

Ver. 5.

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* Μὴ γένοιτο: literally, "*Be it not*"; "*May it not be.*" Perhaps nothing so well represents the *energy* of the Greek as the "*God forbid*" of the Authorized Version.

† Ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε: we may render this (as in 1 Cor. vi. 1) "*When Thou goest to law.*" The Hebrew is, literally, "*When Thou judgest*"; and the Septuagint Greek, used here by St Paul, probably represents this, though by a slight paraphrase.

illustrate His free grace? Would He be unjust? Would He *not* be unjust?

We struggle, in our paraphrase, to bring out the bearing, as it seems to us, of a passage of almost equal grammatical difficulty and argumentative subtlety. The Apostle seems to be "in a strait" between the wish to represent the caviller's thought, and the dread of one really irreverent word. He throws the man's last question into a form which, grammatically, expects a "*no*" when the drift of the thought would lead us up to a shocking "*yes*." * And then at once he passes to his answer. **I speak as man**, man-wise; as if this question of balanced rights and wrongs were one between man and man, not between man and eternal God. Such talk, even for argument's sake, is impossible for the regenerate soul except under urgent protest.

Ver. 6. **Away with the thought** that He would *not* be righteous, in His punishment of any given sin. **Since how shall God judge the world?** How, on such conditions, shall we repose on the ultimate fact that He is the universal Judge? If He *could* not, righteously, punish a deliberate sin because pardon, under certain conditions, illustrates His glory, then He could not punish any sin at all. But He *is* the Judge; He *does* bring wrath to bear!

Ver. 7. Now he takes up the caviller on his own ground, and goes all lengths upon it, and then flies with abhorrence from it. **For if God's truth, in the matter of my lie, has abounded**, has come more

* Μὴ ἄδικος; where logically it would rather be οὐκ ἄδικος.—Just above, we explain "God's righteousness" to mean, as commonly in the Epistle, "God's way of acceptance," His reckoning His Righteousness to the sinner.

amply out, to His glory, why am I too* called to judg-
Ver. 8. ment as a sinner? And why not say, as the slander against us goes, and as some assert that we do say, "Let us do the ill that the good may come"? So they assert of us. But their doom is just, —the doom of those who would utter such a maxim, finding shelter for a lie under the throne of God.

No doubt he speaks from a bitter and frequent experience when he takes this particular case, and with a solemn irony claims exemption for himself from the liar's sentence of death. It is plain that the charge of untruth was, for some reason or another, often thrown at St Paul; we see this in the marked urgency with which, from time to time, he asserts his truthfulness; "The things which I say, behold, before God I lie not" (Gal. i. 20); "I speak the truth in Christ and lie not" (below, ix. 1). Perhaps the manifold sympathies of his heart gave innocent occasion sometimes for the charge. The man who could be "all things to all men" (1 Cor. ix. 22), taking with a genuine insight their point of view, and saying things which shewed that he took it, would be very likely to be set down by narrower minds as untruthful. And the very boldness of his teaching might give further occasion, equally innocent; as he asserted at different times, with equal emphasis, opposite sides of truth. But these somewhat subtle excuses for false witness against this great master of holy sincerity would not be necessary where genuine malice was at work. No man is so truthful that he cannot be charged with falsehood; and no charge is so likely to injure even where it only feigns to

* Κἀγώ: he speaks as claiming, on the caviller's principles, equal indulgence for himself.

strike. And of course the mighty paradox of Justification lent itself easily to the distortions, as well as to the contradictions, of sinners. "Let us do evil that good may come" no doubt represented the report which prejudice and bigotry would regularly carry away and spread after every discourse, and every argument, about free Forgiveness. It is so still: "If this is true, we may live as we like; if this is true, then the worst sinner makes the best saint." Things like this have been current sayings since Luther, since Whitefield, and till now. Later in the Epistle we shall see the unwilling evidence which such distortions bear to the nature of the maligned doctrine; but here the allusion is too passing to bring this out.

"*Whose doom is just.*" What a witness is this to the inalienable truthfulness of the Gospel! This brief stern utterance absolutely repudiates all apology for means by end; all seeking of even the good of men by the way of saying the thing that is not. Deep and strong, almost from the first, has been the temptation to the Christian man to think otherwise, until we find whole systems of casuistry developed whose aim seems to be to go as near the edge of untruthfulness as possible, if not beyond it, in religion. But the New Testament sweeps the entire idea of the pious fraud away, with this short thunder-peal, "*Their doom is just.*" It will hear of no holiness that leaves out truthfulness; no word, no deed, no habit, that even with the purest purpose belies the God of reality and veracity.

If we read aright Acts xxiv. 20, 21, with Acts xxiii. 6, we see St Paul himself once, under urgent pressure of circumstances, betrayed into an equivocation, and then, publicly and soon, expressing his regret of conscience. "I am a Pharisee, and a Pharisee's son;

about the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." True, true in fact, but not the whole truth, not the unreserved account of his attitude towards the Pharisee. Therefore, a week later, he confesses, does he not? that in this one thing there *was* "evil in him, while he stood before the council." Happy the Christian, happy indeed the Christian public man, immersed in management and discussion, whose memory is as clear about truth-telling, and whose conscience is as sensitive!

Ver. 9. **What then? are we superior?*** Say not so at all (*μηδαμῶς*). Thus now he proceeds, taking the word finally from his supposed antagonist. Who are the "*we*," and with whom are "we" compared? The drift of the argument admits of two replies to this question. "*We*" may be "*we Jews*"; as if Paul placed himself in instinctive sympathy, by the side of the compatriot whose cavils he has just combated, and gathered up here into a final assertion all he has said before of the (at least) equal guilt of the Jew beside the Greek. Or "*we*" may be "*we Christians*," taken for the moment as men apart from Christ; it may be a repudiation of the thought that he has been speaking from a pedestal, or from a tribunal. As if he said, "Do not think that I, or my friends in Christ, would say to the world, Jewish or Gentile, that we are holier than you. No; we speak not from the bench, but from the bar. Apart from Him who is our peace and life, we are 'in the same condemnation.' It is exactly because we are in it that we turn and say to you, 'Do not ye fear God?'" On

* *Προεχόμεθα*: "*Do we make excuse for ourselves?*" is a rendering for which there are clearer precedents in the use of the verb. But the context seems to us to advocate the above rendering, which is quite possible grammatically.

the whole, this latter reference seems the truer to the thought and spirit of the whole context.

For we have already charged Jews and Greeks, all of them, with being under sin; with being brought under sin, as the Greek (ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν) bids us more exactly render, giving us the thought that the race has fallen *from* a good estate *into* an evil; self-involved in an awful super-incumbent ruin. As it stands written, that there
Ver. 10. is not even one man righteous; there is not a man who understands, not a man who seeks his (τὸν) God. All have left the road; they have turned worthless together. There is not a man who does what is good, there is not, even so many as one. A grave set open is their throat, exhaling the stench of polluted words; with their tongues they have deceived; asps' venom is under their lips*; (men) whose mouth is brimming with curse and bitterness. Swift are their feet to shed blood; ruin and misery for their victims are in their ways; and the way of peace they never knew. There is no such thing as fear of God before their eyes.

Here is a tesselation of Old Testament oracles. The fragments, hard and dark, come from divers quarries, from the Psalms (v. 9, x. 7, xiv. 1-3, xxxvi. 1, cxl. 3), from the Proverbs (i. 16), from Isaiah (lix. 7). All in the first instance depict and denounce classes of sins and sinners in Israelite society; and we may wonder at first sight how their evidence convicts all men everywhere, and in all time, of condemnable and fatal sin. But we need not only, in submission, own that some-

* ὑπὸ τὰ χείλη: again the Greek (as in verse 9) gives the thought of *motion to a position under*. The human "aspic" is depicted as *bringing its venom up* to its mouth, ready there for the stroke of its fangs.

how it must be so, for "it stands written" here; we may see, in part, how it is so. These special charges against certain sorts of human lives stand in the same Book which levels the general charge against *the human heart* (Jerem. xvii. 9), that it is "deceitful above all things, hopelessly diseased," and incapable of knowing all its own corruption. The crudest surface phenomena of sin are thus never isolated from the dire underlying epidemic of the race of man. The actual evil of men shews the potential evil of man. The tiger-strokes of open wickedness shew the tiger-nature, which is always present, even where its possessor least suspects it. Circumstances infinitely vary, and among them those internal circumstances which we call special tastes and dispositions. But everywhere amidst them all is the human heart, made upright in its creation, self-wrecked into moral wrongness when it turned itself from God. That it *is* turned from Him, not to Him, appears when its direction is tested by the collision between His claim and its will. And in this aversion from the Holy One, who claims the whole heart, there lies at least the potency of "all unrighteousness."

Long after this, as his glorious rest drew near, St Paul wrote again of the human heart, to "his true son" Titus (iii. 3). He reminds him of the wonder of that saving grace which he so fully unfolds in this Epistle; how, "not according to our works," the "God who loveth man" had saved Titus, and saved Paul. And what had he saved them from? From a state in which they were "disobedient, deceived, the slaves of divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." What, the loyal and laborious Titus, the chaste, the upright, the unutterably earnest Paul? Is not the picture greatly, lamentably exagger-

ated, a burst of religious rhetoric? Adolphe Monod* tells us that he once thought it must be so; he felt himself quite unable to submit to the awful witness. But years moved, and he saw deeper into himself, seeing deeper into the holiness of God; and the truthfulness of that passage grew upon him. Not that its difficulties all vanished, but its truthfulness shone out; "and sure I am," he said from his death-bed, "that when this veil of flesh shall fall I shall recognize in that passage the truest portrait ever painted of my own natural heart."

Robert Browning, in a poem of terrible moral interest and power,† confesses that, amidst a thousand doubts and difficulties, his mind was anchored to faith in Christianity by the fact of its doctrine of Sin:

> "I still, to suppose it true, for my part
> See reasons and reasons; this, to begin;
> 'Tis the faith that launched point blank her dart
> At the head of a lie; taught Original Sin,
> The Corruption of Man's Heart."

Ver. 19. Now we know that whatever things the Law says, it speaks them to those in the Law, those within its range, its dominion; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may prove guilty with regard to God. "*The Law*"; that is to say, here, the Old Testament Revelation. This not only contains the Mosaic and Prophetic moral code, but has it for one grand pervading object, in all its parts, to prepare man for Christ by exposing him to himself, in his shame and need. It shews him in a thousand ways that "*he cannot serve* the Lord" (Josh. xxiv. 19), on purpose that in that same Lord he may take refuge from both his guilt

* *Adieux*, § 1. † *Gold Hair, a Legend of Pornic.*

and his impotency. And this it does for "*those in the Law*"; that is to say here, primarily, for the Race, the Church, whom it surrounded with its light of holy fire, and whom in this passage the Apostle has in his first thoughts. Yet they, surely, are not alone upon his mind. We have seen already how "the Law" is, after all, only the more full and direct enunciation of "law"; so that the Gentile as well as the Jew has to do with the light, and with the responsibility, of a knowledge of the will of God. While the chain of stern quotations we have just handled lies heaviest on Israel, it yet binds the world. It "shuts *every* mouth." It drags MAN in guilty before God.

"*That every mouth may be stopped.*" Oh solemn silence, when at last it comes! The harsh or muffled voices of self-defence, of self-assertion, are hushed at length. The man, like one of old, when he saw his *righteous* self in the light of God, "*lays his hand on his mouth*" (Job xl. 4). He leaves speech to God, and learns at last to listen. What shall he hear? An eternal repudiation? An objurgation, and then a final and exterminating anathema? No, something far other, and better, and more wonderful. But there must first be silence on man's part, if it is to be heard. "*Hear*—and your souls shall live."

So the great argument pauses, gathered up into an utterance which at once concentrates what has gone before, and prepares us for a glorious sequel. Shut thy mouth, O man, and listen now:

Ver. 20. **Because by means of works of law there shall be justified no flesh in His presence; for by means of law comes—moral knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις) of sin.**

CHAPTER IX

THE ONE WAY OF DIVINE ACCEPTANCE

ROMANS iii. 21-31

SO then "there is silence" upon earth, that man may hear the "still, small voice," "the sound of stillness" (1 Kings xix. 12),* from the heavens. "The Law" has spoken, with its heart-shaking thunder. It has driven in upon the soul of man, from many sides, that one fact—guilt; the eternity of the claim of righteousness, the absoluteness of the holy Will of God, and, in contrast, the failure of man, of the race, to meet that claim and do that will. It has told man, in effect, that he is "depraved,"† that is to say, morally distorted. He is "totally depraved," that is, the distortion has affected his whole being, so that he can supply on his own part no adequate recovering power which shall restore him to harmony with God. And the Law has nothing more to say to him, except that this condition is not only deplorable, but guilty, accountable, condemnable; and that his own conscience is the concurrent witness that it is so. He is a sinner. To be a sinner is before all things to be a transgressor of law. It is other things besides. It is to be morally

* 1 Kings xix. 12.

† *Depravatus*: twisted, wrenched from the straight line.

diseased, and in need of surgery and medicine. It is to be morally unhappy, and an object of compassion. But first of all it is to be morally guilty, and in urgent need of justification, of a reversal of sentence, of satisfactory settlement with the offended—and eternal—Law of God.

That Law, having spoken its inexorable conditions, and having announced the just sentence of death, stands stern and silent beside the now silent offender. It has no commission to relieve his fears, to allay his grief, to pay his debts. Its awful, merciful business is to say "Thou shalt not sin," and "The wages of sin is death." It summons conscience to attention, and tells it in its now hearing ear far more than it had realized before of the horror and the doom of sin; and then it leaves conscience to take up the message and alarm the whole inner world with the certainty of guilt and judgment. So the man lies speechless before the terribly reticent Law.

Is it a merely abstract picture? Or do our hearts, the writer's and the reader's, bear any witness to its living truthfulness? God knoweth, these things are no curiosities of the past. We are not studying an interesting phase of early Christian thought. We are reading a living record of the experiences of innumerable lives which are lived on earth this day. There is such a thing indeed in our time, at this hour, as conviction of sin. There is such a thing now as a human soul, struck dumb amidst its apologies, its doubts, its denials, by the speech and then the silence of the Law of God. There is such a thing at this hour as a real man, strong and sound in thought, healthy in every faculty, used to look facts of daily life in the face, yet broken down in the indescribable conviction that he is a poor, guilty, lost sinner, and that his overwhelming need is—not now, not just now—the solution of problems of being, but the assur-

ance that his sin is forgiven. He must be justified, or he dies. The God of the Law must somehow say He has no quarrel with him, or he dies a death which he sees, as by an intuition peculiar to conviction of sin, to be in its proper nature a death without hope, without end.

Is this "somehow" possible?

Listen, guilty and silent soul, to a sound which is audible now. In the turmoil of either secular indifference or blind self-justification you could not hear it; at best you heard a meaningless murmur. But listen now; it is articulate, and it speaks to you. The earthquake, the wind, the fire, have passed; and you are indeed awake. Now comes "the sound of stillness" in its turn.

Ver. 21. **But now, apart from Law, God's righteousness** stands displayed, attested **by the Law and the Prophets**; **but** (δὲ)—though attested by them, in the Scriptures which all along, in word and in type, promise better things to come, and above all a Blessed

Ver. 22. One to come—**(it is) God's righteousness, through** faith in Jesus Christ, prepared for all and be-

Ver. 23. stowed upon all who believe in Him. **For there** is no distinction; **for all have sinned, and fall**

Ver. 24. short of the glory of God, **being justified*** gift-wise, gratuitously, **by His grace, through the** redemption, the ransom-rescue, **which is in Christ Jesus.**

Ver. 25. Yes, it resides always in Him, the Lord of saving Merit, and so is to be found in Him alone; whom God presented†, put forward, as Propitia-

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* Δικαιούμενοι: the present participle indicates rather the *permanent principle* of justification than its actual procedure, which is, in each case, a divine sentence of acceptance, an act, an event, single and apart. See on ch. v. 1.

† Ὃν προέθετο ὁ Θεός: it is possible to render, "*Whom God designed*," in His eternal counsel of redemption. But the context just

tion,* through faith in His blood,† His blood of death, of sacrifice, of the altar; so as to demonstrate, to explain, to clear up, His righteousness, His way of acceptance and its method. The Father "presented" the Son so as to shew that His grace meant no real connivance, no indulgence without a lawful reason. He "presented" Him because of His passing-by of sins done before; because the fact *asked explanation* that, while He proclaimed His Law, and had not yet revealed His Gospel, He did nevertheless bear with sinners, reprieving them, condoning them, in the forbearance of God, in the ages when He was seen to "hold back"‡ His wrath, but did not yet disclose the reason why. It was

Ver. 26. with a view, he says again, to this demonstration (*τὴν ἔνδειξιν*) of His righteousness in the present period, the season, the *καιρός*, of the manifested Gospel; that He may be, in our view, as well as in divine fact, at once just, true to His eternal Law, and Justifier of him who belongs to (*τὸν ἐκ*) faith in Jesus.

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below emphasizes the thought of "*declaration*," manifestation, explanation of the hidden Treasure. This seems to decide for the other rendering.

* Ἱλαστήριον: elsewhere in Scripture Greek this word means the Mercy Seat, the golden lid of the Ark, above which the Shechinah shone and on which the blood of atonement was sprinkled. Here is indeed a manifest and noble type of Christ. But on the other hand the word ἱλαστήριον gets that meaning only indirectly. Its native meaning is rather "*a price of expiation*." And a somewhat sudden insertion here of the imagery of the Mercy Seat seems unlikely, in the absence of all other allusion to the High Priestly function of our Lord.

† We may punctuate, "*through faith, in His blood*"; as if to say "He is Propitiation in (in virtue of) His blood; we get the benefit through faith." But this rendering seems to us the less likely, as the less simple. The construction, "*faith in*," πίστις ἐν τινί, is fully verified by Mark i. 15; "believe *in* the Gospel."

‡ Ἀνοχή: we think that the word here is a pregnant expression for '*the time when God forebore*."

This is the voice from heaven, audible when the sinner's mouth is shut, while his ears are opened by the touch of God. Without that spiritual introduction to them, very likely they will seem either a fact in the history of religious thought, interesting in the study of development, but no more; or a series of assertions corresponding to unreal needs, and in themselves full of disputable points. Read them in the hour of conviction of sin; in other words, bring to them your whole being, stirred from above to its moral depths, and you will not take them either indifferently, or with opposition. As the key meets the lock they will meet your exceeding need. Every sentence, every link of reasoning, every affirmation of fact, will be precious to you beyond all words. And you will never *fully* understand them except in such hours, or in the life which has such hours amongst its indelible memories.

Listen over again, in this sacred silence, thus broken by "the pleasant voice of the Mighty One."

"*But now*"; the happy "*now*" of present fact, of waking certainty. It is no day-dream. Look, and see; touch, and feel. Turn the blessed page again; γέγραπται, "*It stands written.*" There is indeed a "Righteousness of God," a settled way of mercy which is as holy as it is benignant, an acceptance as good in eternal Law as in eternal Love. It is "*attested by the Law and the Prophets*"; countless lines of prediction and foreshadowing meet upon it, to negative for ever the fear of illusion, of delusion. Here is no fortuitous concourse, but the long-laid plan of God. Behold its procuring Cause, magnificent, tender, divine, human, spiritual, historic. It is the beloved Son of the Father; no antagonist power from a region alien to the blessed Law and its Giver. The Law-Giver is the Christ-

Giver; He has "*set Him forth*," He has provided in Him an expiation which—does not persuade Him to have mercy, for He is eternal Love already, but liberates His love along the line of a wonderfully satisfied Holiness, and explains that liberation (to the contrite) so as supremely to win their worship and their love to the Father and the Son. Behold the Christ of God; behold the blood of Christ. In the Gospel, He is everywhere, it is everywhere; but what is your delight to find Him, and it, here upon the threshold of your life of blessing? Looking upon the Crucified, while you still "lay your hand upon your mouth," till it is removed that you may bless His Name, you understand the joy with which, age after age, men have spoken of a Death which is their life, of a Cross which is their crown and glory. You are in no mood, here and now, to disparage the doctrine of the Atoning Blood; to place it in the background of your Christianity; to obscure the Cross behind even the roofs of Bethlehem. You cannot now think well of any Gospel that does not say, "*First of all*, Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3). You are a sinner, and you know it; "guilty before God"; and for you as such the Propitiation governs your whole view of man, of God, of life, of heaven. For you, however it may be for others, "Redemption" cannot be named, or thought of, apart from its first precious element, "remission of sins," justification of the guilty. It is steeped in ideas of Propitiation it is red and glorious with the Redeemer's blood, without which it could not have been. The all-blessed God, with all His attributes, His character, is by you seen evermore as "*just, yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*." He shines on you through the Word, and in your heart's experience,

in many another astonishing aspect. But all those others are qualified for you by this, that He is the God of a holy Justification; that He is the God who has accepted you, the guilty one, in Christ. All your thoughts of Him are formed and followed out at the foot of the Cross. Golgotha is the observatory from which you count and watch the lights of the moving heaven of His Being, His Truth, His Love.

How precious to you now are the words which once, perhaps, were worse than insipid, "*Faith*," "*Justification*," "*the Righteousness of God*"! In the discovery of your necessity, and of Christ as the all-in-all to meet it, you see with little need of exposition the place and power of *Faith*. It means, you see it now, simply your reception of Christ. It is your contact with Him, your embrace of Him. It is not virtue; it is absolutely remote from merit. But it is necessary; as necessary as the hand that takes the alms, or as the mouth that eats the unbought meal. The meaning of *Justification* is now to you no riddle of the schools. Like all the great words of scriptural theology it carries with it in divine things the meaning it bears in common things, only for a new and noble application; you see this with joy, by the insight of awakened conscience. He who "*justifies*" you does exactly what the word always imports. He does not educate you, or inspire you, up to acceptability. He pronounces you acceptable, satisfactory, at peace with Law. And this He does for Another's sake; on account of the Merit of Another, who has so done and suffered as to win an eternal welcome for Himself and everything that is His, and therefore for all who are found in Him, and therefore for you who have fled into Him, believing. So you receive with joy and wonder "*the Righteousness of God*," His way to bid

you, so deeply guilty in yourself, welcome without fear to your Judge. You are "righteous," that is to say, satisfactory to the inexorable Law. How? Because you are transfigured into a moral perfectness such as could constitute a claim? No, but because Jesus Christ died, and you, receiving Him, are found in Him.

"*There is no difference.*" Once, perhaps, you resented that word, if you paused to note it. Now you take all its import home. Whatever otherwise your "difference" may be from the most disgraceful and notorious breakers of the Law of God, you know now that there is none in *this* respect—that you are as hopelessly, whether or not as distantly, remote as they are from "*the glory of God.*" His moral "glory," the inexorable perfectness of His Character, with its inherent demand that you must perfectly correspond to Him in order so to be at peace with Him—you are indeed "*short of*" this. The harlot, the liar, the murderer, are short of it; but so are you. Perhaps they stand at the bottom of a mine, and you on the crest of an Alp; but you are as little able to touch the stars as they. So you thankfully give yourself up, side by side with them, if they will but come too, to be *carried* to the height of divine acceptance, by the gift of God, "justified gift-wise by His grace."

Ver. 27. **Where then is our (ἡ) boasting? It is shut out. By means of what law? Of works? No, but by means of faith's law,** the institute, the ordinance, which lays it upon us not to deserve, but to confide. And who can analyse or describe the joy and rest of the soul from which at last is "*shut out*" the foul inflation of a religious "*boast*"? We have praised ourselves, we have valued ourselves, on one thing or another supposed to make us worthy of the Eternal

We may perhaps have had some specious pretexts for doing so; or we may have "boasted" (such boastings are not unknown) of nothing better than being a little less ungodly, or a little more manly, than some one else. But this is over now for ever, in principle; and we lay its practice under our Redeemer's feet to be destroyed. And great is the rest and gladness of sitting down at His feet, while the door is shut and the key is turned upon our self-applause. There is no holiness without that "exclusion"; and there is no happiness where holiness is not.

Ver. 28. **For we reckon,* we conclude, we gather up our** facts and reasons thus, **that man is justified † by faith, apart from,** irrespective of, **works of law.** In other words, the meriting cause lies wholly in Christ, and wholly outside the man's conduct. We have seen, implicitly, in the passage above, verses 10-18, what is meant here by "*works of Law*," or by "*works of the Law*." The thought is not of ritual prescription, but of moral rule. The law-breakers of verses 10-18 are men who commit violent deeds, and speak foul words, and fail to do what is good. The law-keeper, by consequence, is the man whose conduct in such respects is right, negatively and positively. And the "*works of the law*" are such deeds accordingly. So here "*we conclude*" that the justification of fallen man takes place, as to the merit which procures it, irrespective of his well-doing. It is respective only of Christ, as to merit; it has to do only, as to personal reception, with the acceptance of the meriting Christ, that is to say with faith in Him.

* Reading γὰρ not οὖν.

† Δικαιοῦσθαι: the present infinitive, as in ver. 25, puts before us the permanence of the principle on which is based the definite act.

Then come, like a short "coda" following a full musical cadence, two brief questions and their answers, spoken almost as if again a Rabbinist were in discussion.

Ver. 29, Ver. 30. **Is God the Jews' God only? Not of the Nations too? Yes, of the Nations too; assuming** (εἴπερ) **that God is one**, the same Person in both cases; **who will justify Circumcision on the principle of faith, and Uncircumcision by means of faith.** He takes the fact, now ascertained, that faith, still faith, that is to say Christ received, is the condition to justification for all mankind; and he reasons back to the fact (so amply "attested by the Law and the Prophets," from Genesis onwards) that the true God is equally the God of all. Probably the deep inference is suggested that the fence of privilege drawn for ages round Israel was meant ultimately for the whole world's blessing, and not to hold Israel in a selfish isolation.

Ver. 31. **We cancel Law, then, by this faith of ours** (διὰ τῆς πίστεως)? We open the door, then, to moral licence? We abolish code and precept, then, when we ask not for conduct, but for faith? **Away with the thought**; nay, we establish Law; we go the very way to give a new sacredness to its every command, and to disclose a new power for the fulfilment of them all. But how this is, and is to be, the later argument is to shew.

Detached Note to Romans III.

It would be a deeply interesting work to collect and exhibit together examples of the conveyance of great spiritual blessing, in memorable lives, through the perusal of the Epistle to the Romans. Augustine's final crisis (see below, on xiii. 14) would be one such example. As specimens of what must be a multitude we quote two cases, in each of which one verse in this third chapter of the Epistle proved the means of the divine message in a life of historical interest.

Padre Paolo Sarpi (1552—1623), "Councillor and Theologian" to the Venetian Republic, and historian of the Council of Trent, was one of the many eminent men of his day who never broke with the Roman Church, yet had genuine spiritual sympathies with the Reformation. The record of his last hours is affecting and instructive, and shews him reposing his hope with great simplicity on the divine message of this chapter, though the report makes him quote it inexactly. "Night being come, and want of spirits increasing upon him, he caused another reading of the Passion written by Saint John. He spake of his own misery, and of the trust and confidence which he had in the blood of Christ. He repeated very often those words, *Quem proposuit Deus Mediatorem per fidem in sanguine suo*, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a Mediator through faith in His blood.' In which he seemed to receive an extreme consolation. He repeated (though with much faintness) divers places of Saint Paul. He protested that of his part he had nothing to present

God with but miseries and sins, yet nevertheless he desired to be drowned in the abyss of the divine mercy; with so much submission on one side, and yet so much cheerfulness on the other side, that he drew tears from all that were present." *

It was through the third chapter of the Romans that heavenly light first came to the terribly troubled soul of William Cowper, at St Albans, in 1764. Some have said that Cowper's religion was to blame for his melancholy. The case was far different. The first tremendous attack occurred at a time when, by his own clear account, he was quite without serious religion; it had nothing whatever to do with either Christian doctrine or Christian practice. The recovery from it came with his first sight, in Scripture, of the divine mercy in our Lord Jesus Christ. His own account of this crisis is as follows: †

"But the happy period which was to afford me a clear opening of the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus, was now arrived. I flung myself into a chair near the window, and, seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw was the 25th of the 3rd of Romans; 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.'

"Immediately I received strength to believe it, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had

* *The Life of Father Paul the Venetian, translated out of Italian*. London, 1676.

† *Memoir of the Early Life of William Cowper, written by Himself*.

made, my pardon sealed in His blood, and all the fulness and completeness of His justification. Unless the Almighty arm had been under me, I think I should have died with gratitude and joy. I could only look up to heaven in silent fear, overwhelmed with love and wonder. But the work of the Holy Ghost is best described in His own words; it is 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.'"

CHAPTER X

ABRAHAM AND DAVID

ROMANS iv. 1-12

THE Jewish disputant is present still to the Apostle's thought. It could not be otherwise in this argument. No question was more pressing on the Jewish mind than that of Acceptance; thus far, truly, the teaching and discipline of the Old Testament had not been in vain. And St Paul had not only, in his Christian Apostleship, debated that problem countless times with Rabbinic combatants; he had been himself a Rabbi, and knew by experience alike the misgivings of the Rabbinist's conscience, and the subterfuges of his reasoning.

So now there rises before him the great name of Abraham, as a familiar watchword of the controversy of Acceptance. He has been contending for an absolutely inclusive verdict of "*guilty*" against man, against every man. He has been shutting with all his might the doors of thought against human "*boasting*," against the least claim of man to have merited his acceptance. Can he carry this principle into quite impartial issues? Can he, a Jew in presence of Jews, apply it without apology, without reserve, to "the Friend of God" himself? What will he say to that majestic Example of man? His name itself sounds like a claim to almost

worship. As he moves across the scene of Genesis, we —even we Gentiles—rise up as it were in reverent homage, honouring this figure at once so real and so near to the ideal; marked by innumerable lines of individuality, totally unlike the composed picture of legend or poem, yet walking with God Himself in a personal intercourse so habitual, so tranquil, so congenial. Is this a name to becloud with the assertion that here, as everywhere, acceptance was hopeless but for the clemency of God, "*gift-wise, without deeds of law*"? Was not at least Abraham accepted because he was morally worthy of acceptance? And if Abraham, then surely, in abstract possibility, others also. There must be a group of men, small or large, there is at least one man, who can "boast" of his peace with God.

On the other hand, if with Abraham it was not thus, then the inference is easy to all other men. Who but he is called "the Friend" (2 Chron. xx. 7, Isai. xli. 8)? Moses himself, the almost deified Lawgiver, is but "the Servant," trusted, intimate, honoured in a sublime degree by his eternal Master. But he is never called "the Friend." That peculiar title seems to preclude altogether the question of a legal acceptance. Who thinks of his friend as one whose relation to him needs to be good in law at all? The friend stands as it were behind law, or above it, in respect of his fellow. He holds a relation implying personal sympathies, identity of interests, contact of thought and will, not an anxious previous settlement of claims, and remission of liabilities. If then the Friend of the Eternal Judge proves, nevertheless, to have needed Justification, and to have received it by the channel not of his personal worth but of the grace of God, there will be little hesitation about other

men's need, and the way by which alone other men shall find it met.

In approaching this great example, for such it will prove to be, St Paul is about to illustrate all the main points of his inspired argument. By the way, by implication, he gives us the all-important fact that even an Abraham, even "the Friend," did need justification *somehow*. Such is the eternal Holy One that no man can walk by His side and live, no, not in the path of inmost "friendship," without an acceptance before His face as He is Judge. Then again, such is He, that even an Abraham found this acceptance, as a matter of fact, not by merit but by faith; not by presenting himself, but by renouncing himself, and taking God for all; by pleading not, "I am worthy," but, "Thou art faithful." It is to be shewn that Abraham's justification was such that it gave him not the least ground for self-applause; it was not in the least degree based on merit. It was "of grace, not of debt." A promise of sovereign kindness, connected with the redemption of himself, and of the world, was made to him. He was not morally worthy of such a promise, if only because he was not morally perfect. And he was, humanly speaking, physically incapable of it. But God offered Himself freely to Abraham, in His promise; and Abraham opened the empty arms of personal reliance to receive the unearned gift. Had he stayed first to earn it he would have shut it out; he would have closed his arms. Rightly renouncing himself, because seeing and trusting his gracious God, the sight of whose holy glory annihilates the idea of man's claims, he opened his arms, and the God of peace filled the void. The man received his God's approval, because he interposed nothing of his own to intercept it.

From one point of view, the all-important view-point here, it mattered not what Abraham's conduct had been. As a fact, he was already devout when the incident of Gen. xv. occurred. But he was also actually a sinner; *that* is made quite plain by Gen. xii., the very chapter of the Call. And potentially, according to Scripture, he was a great sinner; for he was an instance of the human heart. But this, while it constituted Abraham's urgent need of acceptance, was not in the least a barrier to his acceptance, when he turned from himself, in the great crisis of absolute faith, and accepted God in His promise.

The principle of the acceptance of "the Friend" was identically that which underlies the acceptance of the most flagrant transgressor. As St Paul will soon remind us, David in the guilt of his murderous adultery, and Abraham in the grave walk of his worshipping obedience, stand upon the same level here. Actually or potentially, each is a great sinner. Each turns from himself, unworthy, to God in His promise. And the promise is his, not because his hand is full of merit, but because it is empty of himself.

It is true that Abraham's justification, unlike David's, is not explicitly connected in the narrative with a moral crisis of his soul. He is not depicted, in Gen. xv., as a conscious penitent, flying from justice to the Judge. But is there not a deep suggestion that something not unlike this did then pass over him, and through him? That short assertion, that "he trusted the LORD, and He counted it to him for righteousness," is an anomaly in the story, if it has not a spiritual depth hidden in it. Why, just then and there, should we be told this about his acceptance with God? Is it not because the vastness of the promise had made the man see in contrast

the absolute failure of a corresponding merit in himself? Job (xlii. 1-6) was brought to self-despairing penitence not by the fires of the Law but by the glories of Creation. Was not Abraham brought to the same consciousness, whatever form it may have taken in his character and period, by the greater glories of the Promise? Surely it was there and then that he learnt that secret of self-rejection in favour of God which is the other side of all true faith, and which came out long years afterwards, in its mighty issues of "work," when he laid Isaac on the altar.*

It is true, again, that Abraham's faith, his justifying reliance, is not connected in the narrative with any articulate expectation of an atoning Sacrifice. But here first we dare to say, even at the risk of that formidable charge, an antique and obsolete theory of the Patriarchal creed, that probably Abraham knew much more about the Coming One than a modern critique will commonly allow. "He rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad" (John viii. 56). And further, the faith which justifies, though what it touches in fact is the blessed Propitiation, or rather God in the Propitiation, does not always imply an articulate knowledge of the whole "reason of the hope." It assuredly implies a true submission to *all that the believer knows* of the revelation of that reason. But he may (by circumstances) know very little of it, and yet be a believer. The saint who prayed (Psal. cxliii. 2) "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified," cast himself upon a God who, being absolutely holy, yet can somehow, just as He is, justify the sinner. Perhaps

* On St James' use of that great incident, see detached note, p. 115.

he knew much of the reason of Atonement, as it lies in God's mind, and as it is explained, as it is demonstrated, in the Cross. But perhaps he did not. What he did was to cast himself up to the full light he had, "without one plea," upon his Judge, as a man awfully conscious of his need, and trusting only in a sovereign mercy, which *must* also be a righteous, a law-honouring mercy, because it is the mercy of the Righteous Lord.

Let us not be mistaken, meanwhile, as if such words meant that a definite creed of the Atoning Work is not possible, or is not precious. This Epistle will help us to such a creed, and so will Galatians, and Hebrews, and Isaiah, and Leviticus, and the whole Scripture. "Prophets and kings desired to see the things we see, and did not see them" (Luke x. 24). But that is no reason why we should not adore the mercy that has unveiled to us the Cross and the blessed Lamb.

But it is time to come to the Apostle's words as they stand.

Ver. 1. What then shall we say that Abraham has found—"*has found*," the perfect tense of abiding and always significant fact—"*has found*," in his great discovery of divine peace—our forefather, according to the flesh? "*According to the flesh*"; that is to say, (having regard to the prevailing moral use of the word "*flesh*" in this Epistle,) "in respect of self," "in the region of his own works and merits."* Ver. 2. For if Abraham was justified as a result of works, he has a boast; he has a right to self-applause. Yes, such is the principle indicated here; if man merits, man is

* We see much reason, however, in the explanation which connects κατὰ σάρκα with πατέρα (or προπάτορα) ἡμῶν: "*our father according to the flesh*," our natural progenitor.

entitled to self-applause. May we not say, in passing, that the common instinctive sense of the moral discord of self-applause, above all in spiritual things, is one among many witnesses to the truth of our justification by faith only? But St Paul goes on; **Ah, but not towards God**; not when even an Abraham looks HIM in the face, and sees himself in that Light. As if to say, "If he earned justification, he might have boasted rightly; but 'rightful boasting,' when man sees God, is a thing unthinkable; therefore his justification was given, not earned." **For what says the Scripture,** Ver. 3. the passage, the great text (Gen. xv. 6)? "**Now Abraham believed** * **God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.**" **Now to the man who works, his** Ver. 4. (ὁ) **reward, his earned requital,† is not reckoned grace-wise, as a gift of generosity, but debt-wise; it is to the man who does not work, but believes, confides, in Him who justifies the ungodly one, that "his faith is reckoned as righteousness."** "*The ungodly one*"; as to bring out by an extreme case the glory of the wonderful paradox. "*The ungodly*," the ἀσεβής, is undoubtedly a word intense and dark; it means not the sinner only, but the open, defiant sinner. Every human heart is *capable* of such sinfulness, for "*the* heart is deceitful above all things." In this respect, as we have seen, in the potential respect, even an Abraham is a great sinner. But there are indeed "sinners and sinners," in the experiences of life; and St Paul is ready now with a conspicuous example of

* In the Greek, ἐπίστευσε stands first in the clause, and is thus emphatic.

† Not that μισθὸς always gives the thought of earning as a right. It may mean merely "*result, issue*," however realized. See *e.g.* 2 John 8. But the context here decides the reference.

the justification of one who was truly, at one miserable period, by his own fault, "an ungodly one."

"Thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" (2 Sam. xii. 14). He had done so indeed. The faithful photography of the Scriptures shews us David, the chosen, the faithful, the man of spiritual experiences, acting out his lustful look in adultery, and half covering his adultery with the most base of constructive murders, and then, for long months, refusing to repent. Yet was David justified: "I have sinned against the Lord"; "The Lord also hath put away thy sin." He turned from his awfully ruined self to God, and *at once* he received remission. Then, and to the last, he was chastised. But then and there he was unreservedly justified, and with a justification which made him sing a loud beatitude.

Ver. 6. **Just as David too speaks his felicitation (τὸν μακαρισμὸν) of the man** (and it was himself) **to whom God reckons righteousness irrespective of works,**

Ver. 7. **"Happy they whose iniquities have been remitted,**

Ver. 8. **and whose sins have been covered; happy the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin"** (Psal. xxxii. 1, 2). Wonderful words, in the context of the experience out of which they spring! A human soul which has greatly transgressed, and which knows it well, and knows too that to the end it will suffer a sore discipline because of it, for example and humiliation, nevertheless knows its pardon, and knows it as a happiness indescribable. The iniquity has been "*lifted*"; the sin has been "*covered*," has been struck out of the book of "*reckoning*," written by the Judge. The penitent will never forgive himself; in this very Psalm he tears from his sin all the covering woven by his own heart. But his God has given him remission,

has reckoned him as one who has not sinned, so far as access to Him and peace with Him are in question. And so his song of shame and penitence begins with a beatitude, and ends with a cry of joy.

We pause to note the exposition implied here of the phrase, "*to reckon righteousness.*" It is to treat the man as one whose account is clear. "Happy the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin." In the phrase itself, "*to reckon* righteousness," (as in its Latin equivalent, "*to impute* righteousness,") the question, *what clears the account*, is not answered. Suppose the impossible case of a record kept absolutely clear by the man's own sinless goodness; then the "reckoned," the "imputed, righteousness" would mean the Law's contentment with him on his own merits. But the context of human sin fixes the actual reference to an "imputation" which means that the awfully defective record is treated, for a divinely valid reason, as if it were, what it is not, good. The man is at peace with his Judge, though he has sinned, because the Judge has joined him to Himself, and taken up his liability, and answered for it to His own Law. The man is dealt with as righteous, being a sinner, for his glorious Redeemer's sake. It is pardon, but more than pardon. It is no mere indulgent dismissal; it is a welcome as of the worthy to the embrace of the Holy One.

Such is the Justification of God. We shall need to remember it through the whole course of the Epistle. To make Justification a mere synonym for Pardon is always inadequate. Justification is the contemplation and treatment of the penitent sinner, found in Christ, as righteous, as satisfactory to the Law, not merely as one whom the Law lets go. Is this a fiction? Not at

all. It is vitally linked to two great spiritual facts. One is, that the sinner's Friend has Himself dealt, in the sinner's interests, with the Law, honouring its holy claim to the uttermost under the human conditions which He freely undertook. The other is that he has mysteriously, but really, joined the sinner to Himself, in faith, by the Spirit; joined him to Himself as limb, as branch, as bride. Christ and His disciples are *really* One in the order of spiritual life. And so the community between Him and them is real, the community of their debt on the one side, of His merit on the other.

Now again comes up the question, never far distant in St Paul's thought, and in his life, what these facts of Justification have to do with Gentile sinners. Here is David blessing God for his unmerited acceptance, an acceptance by the way wholly unconnected with the ritual of the altar. Here above all is Abraham, "justified in consequence of faith." But David was a child of the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham was the father of that covenant. Do not their justifications speak only to those who stand, with them, inside that charmed circle? Was not Abraham justified by faith *plus circumcision*? Did not the faith act only because he was already one of the privileged? This felicitation

Ver. 9. therefore, this cry of "Happy are the freely justified," is it upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision? For we say that to Abraham, with an emphasis* on "*Abraham*," his faith was reckoned as righteousness. The question, he means, is legitimate, "*for*" Abraham is not at first sight a case in point for

Ver. 10. the justification of the outside world, the non-privileged races of man. But consider: How

* By the position of the name in the Greek sentence.

then was it reckoned? To Abraham in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncir-

Ver. 11. cumcision; fourteen years at least had to pass before the covenant rite came in. And he received the sign of circumcision, (with a stress upon "*sign*," as if to say that the "*thing*," the reality signed, was his already,) as a seal on the righteousness of the faith that was in his uncircumcision, a seal on the acceptance which he received, antecedent to all formal privilege, in that bare hand of faith. And all this was so, and was recorded so, with a purpose of far-reaching significance: that he might be father, exemplar, representative, of all who believe notwithstanding uncircumcision,* that to them righteousness should be reckoned; and father of

Ver. 12. circumcision, exemplar and representative within its circle also, for those who do not merely belong to circumcision, but for those † who also step in the track of the uncircumcision-faith of our father Abraham.

So privilege had nothing to do with acceptance, except to countersign the grant of a grace absolutely free. The Seal did nothing whatever to make the Covenant. It only verified the fact, and guaranteed the *bona fides* of the Giver. As the Christian Sacraments are, so was the Patriarchal Sacrament; it was "a sure testimony and effectual sign of God's grace and good will." ‡ But the grace and the good will come not through the Sacrament as through a medium, but straight from God to the man who took God at His word. "The means whereby he received," the mouth with which he fed upon the celestial food, "was faith." § The rite came

* Διὰ ἀκροβυστίας: as if *passing through* its seeming obstacle.

† So the Greek precisely. But practically the words "*for those*" may be omitted here.

‡ See Article xxv. § See Article xxviii.

not between the man and his accepting Lord, but as it were was present at the side to assure him with a physical concurrent fact that all was true. "Nothing between" was the law of the great transaction; nothing, not even a God-given ordinance; nothing but the empty arms receiving the Lord Himself;—and empty arms indeed put "nothing between."

Detached Note to Chapter X

The following is extracted from the Commentary on this Epistle in "The Cambridge Bible" (p. 261).

"[What shall we say to] the verbal discrepancy between St Paul's explicit teaching that 'a man is justified by faith *without works*,' and St James' equally explicit teaching that '*by works* a man is justified, and *not by faith only*'? With only the New Testament before us, it is hard not to assume that the one Apostle has in view some distortion of the doctrine of *the other*. But the fact (see Lightfoot's *Galatians*, detached note to ch. iii.) that Abraham's faith was a staple Rabbinic text alters the case, by making it perfectly possible that St James (writing to members of the Jewish Dispersion) had not Apostolic but Rabbinic teaching in view. And the line such teaching took is indicated by Jas ii. 19, where an example is given of the faith in question; and that example is concerned wholly with the grand point of *strictly Jewish orthodoxy*—God is One. . . . The persons addressed [were thus those whose] idea of faith was not *trustful acceptance*, a belief of the heart, but *orthodox adherence*, a belief of the head. And St James [took] these persons strictly on their own ground, and assumed, for his argument, their own very faulty account of faith to be correct.

"He would thus be proving the point, equally dear to St Paul, that mere theoretic orthodoxy, apart from effects on the will, is valueless. He would not, in the remotest degree, be disputing the Pauline doctrine that the guilty soul is put into a position of acceptance with the Father only by vital connexion with the Son, and that this connexion is effectuated, *absolutely and alone*,

not by personal merit, but by trustful acceptance of the Propitiation and its all-sufficient vicarious merit. From such trustful acceptance 'works' (in the profoundest sense) will inevitably follow; not as antecedents but as consequents of justification. And thus . . . 'it is faith alone which justifies; but the faith which justifies can never be alone.'"

CHAPTER XI

ABRAHAM (ii)

Romans iv. 13-25

AGAIN we approach the name of Abraham, Friend of God, Father of the Faithful. We have seen him justified by faith, personally accepted because turning altogether to the sovereign Promiser. We see him now in some of the glorious issues of that acceptance; "Heir of the world," "Father of many nations." And here too all is of grace, all comes through faith. Not works not merit, not ancestral and ritual privilege, secured to Abraham the mighty Promise; it was his because he, pleading absolutely nothing of personal worthiness, and supported by no guarantees of ordinance "*believed God.*"

We see him as he steps out from his tent under that glorious canopy, that Syrian "night of stars." We look up with him to the mighty depths, and receive their impression upon our eyes. Behold the innumerable points and clouds of light! Who can count the half-visible rays which make white the heavens, gleaming behind, beyond, the thousands of more numerable luminaries? The lonely old man who stands gazing there, perhaps side by side with his divine Friend manifested in human form, is told to try to count. And then he hears the promise, "So shall thy seed be."

It was then and there that he received justification by faith. It was then and there also that, by faith, as a man uncovenanted, unworthy, but called upon to take what God gave, he received the promise that he should be "heir of the world."

It was an unequalled paradox—unless indeed we place beside it the scene when, eighteen centuries later, in the same land, a descendant of Abraham's, a Syrian Craftsman, speaking as a religious Leader to His followers, told them (Matt. xiii. 37, 38) that the "field was the world," and He the Master of the field.

"*Heir of the world*"! Did this mean, of the universe itself? Perhaps it did, for CHRIST was to be the Claimant of the promise in due time; and under His feet all things, literally all, are set already in right, and shall be hereafter set in fact. But the more limited, and probably in this place the fitter, reference is vast enough; a reference to "the world" of earth, and of man upon it. In his "seed," that childless senior was to be King of Men, Monarch of the continents and oceans. To him, in his seed, "the utmost parts of the earth" were given "for his possession." Not his little clan only, encamped on the dark fields around him, nor even the direct descendants only of his body, however numerous, but "all nations," "all kindreds of the earth," were "to call him blessed," and to be blessed in him, as their patriarchal Chief, their Head in covenant with God. "We see not yet all things" fulfilled of this astonishing grant and guarantee. We shall not do so, till vast promised developments of the ways of God have come to sight. But we do see already steps taken towards that issue, steps long, majestic, never to be retraced. We see at this hour in literally every region of the human world the messengers—an always more numerous army—of

the Name of "the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.' They are working everywhere; and everywhere, notwithstanding innumerable difficulties, they are winning the world for the great Heir of the Promise. Through paths they know not these missionaries have gone out; paths hewn by the historical providence of God, and by His eternal life in the Church, and in the soul. When "the world" has seemed shut, by war, by policy, by habit, by geography, it has opened, that they may enter; till we see Japan throwing back its castle-doors, and inner Africa not only discovered but become a household word for the sake of its missions, of its martyrdoms, of the resolve of its native chiefs to abolish slavery even in its domestic form.*

No secular conscious programme has had to do with this. Causes entirely beyond the reach of human combination have been, as a fact, combined; the world has been opened to the Abrahamic message just as the Church has been inspired anew to enter in, and has been awakened to a deeper understanding of her glorious mission. For here too is the finger of God; not only in the history of the world, but in the life of the Church and of the Christian. For a long century now, in the most living centres of Christendom, there has been waking and rising a mighty revived consciousness of the glory of the Gospel of the Cross, and of the Spirit; of the grace of Christ, and also of His claim. And at this hour, after many a gloomy forecast of unbelieving and apprehensive thought, there are more men and women ready to go to the ends of the earth with the message of the Son of Abraham, than in all time before.

Contrast these issues, even these—leaving out of

* In Uganda, 1893.

sight the mighty future—with the starry night when the wandering Friend of God was asked to believe the incredible, and was justified by faith, and was invested through faith with the world's crown. Is not God indeed in the fulfilment? Was He not indeed in the promise? We are ourselves a part of the fulfilment; we, one of the "many Nations" of whom the great Solitary was then made "the Father." Let us bear our witness, and set to our seal.

In doing so, we attest and illustrate the work, the ever blessed work, of faith. That man's reliance, at that great midnight-hour, merited nothing, but received everything. He took in the first place acceptance with God, and then with it, as it were folded and embedded in it, he took riches inexhaustible of privilege and blessing; above all, the blessing of being made a blessing. So now, in view of that hour of Promise, and of these ages of fulfilment, we see our own path of peace in its divine simplicity. We read, as if written on the heavens in stars, the words, "Justified by Faith." And we understand already, what the Epistle will soon amply unfold to us, how for us, as for Abraham, blessings untold of other orders lie treasured in the grant of our acceptance. "Not for him only, but for us also, believing."

Let us turn again to the text.

Ver. 13. For not through law came the promise to Abraham, or to his seed, of his being the world's heir, but through faith's righteousness; through the acceptance received by uncovenanted, unprivileged faith. Ver. 14. For if those who belong to law inherit Abraham's promise, faith is ipso facto void, and the promise is ipso facto annulled.* For wrath

* We attempt thus to represent the perfects, κεκένωται, κατήργηται.

is what the Law works out; it is only* where law is not that transgression is not either. As much as to say, that to suspend eternal blessing, the blessing which in its nature can deal only with ideal conditions, upon man's obedience to law, is to bar fatally the hope of a fulfilment. Why? Not because the Law is not holy; not because disobedience is not guilty; as if man were ever, for a moment, mechanically compelled to disobey. But because as a fact man is a fallen being, however he became so, and whatever is his guilt as such. He is fallen, and has no true self-restoring power. If then he is to be blessed, the work must begin in spite of himself. It must come from without, it must come unearned, it must be of grace, through faith. Therefore it is on (literally, "*out of*") faith, in order to be grace-wise, to make secure the promise, to all the seed, not only to that which belongs to the Law, but to that which belongs to the faith of Abraham, to the "seed" whose claim is no less and no more than Abraham's faith; who is father of all us, as it stands written, (Gen. xvii. 5), "Father of many Nations† have I appointed thee"—in the sight of the God whom he believed, who vivifies the dead, and calls, addresses, deals with, things not being as being. "*In the sight of God*"; as if to say, that it matters little what Abraham is for "us all" in the sight of *man*, in the sight and estimate of the Pharisee. The Eternal Justifier and Promiser dealt with Abraham, and in him with the world, before the birth of that Law

Ver. 15.

Ver. 16.

Ver. 17.

* Read οὗ δὲ not οὗ γάρ.

† It is impossible to convey in English the point of the word ἔθνη here, with its faint reference to the *Gentiles* (in the sense common in later Judaism), spiritually "naturalized" among Abraham's descendants.

which the Pharisee has perverted into his rampart of privilege and isolation. He took care that the mighty transaction should take place not actually only, but significantly, in the open field and beneath the boundless cope of stars. It was to affect not one tribe, but all the nations. It was to secure blessings which were not to be demanded by the privileged, but taken by the needy. And so the great representative Believer was called to believe before Law, before legal Sacrament, and under every personal circumstance of humiliation and discouragement. Who, past hope, on hope, believed; stepping from the dead hope of nature to the bare hope of the promise, so that he became father of many Nations; according to what stands spoken, "So shall thy seed be."* And, because he failed not † in his (τῇ) faith, he did not notice his own body, already turned to death, near (που) a century old as he now was, and the death-state of the womb of Sarah. No, on the promise of God—he did not waver by his unbelief,‡ but received strength § by his (τῇ) faith, giving glory to God, the "glory" of dealing with Him as being what He is, Almighty and All-true, and fully persuaded that

Ver. 18.

Ver. 19.

Ver. 20.

Ver. 21.

* Observe the characteristically *fragmentary* quotation, which assumes the reader's knowledge of the context—the context of the stars. Compare Heb. vi. 14, which similarly quotes Gen. xxii. 16, 17.

† Μὴ ἀσθενήσας:—we attempt to convey the thought, given by the aorist, that he *then and there* was "not weak."

‡ We render this clause as literally as possible. It is as if he would have written "On the promise of God *he relied*," but changed the expression to one more ample and more forcible. "*His* unbelief": τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ. Not that Abraham *had* unbelief actually, but he had it potentially; he *might have* disbelieved. In that sense unbelief was "*his*."

§ Ἐνεδυναμώθη: the thought is of strength summoned *at a crisis*.

what He has promised He is able actually to do. Where-
Ver. 22. fore actually (*καὶ*) it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Not because such a "giving to God the glory" which is only His eternal due was morally meritorious, in the least degree. If it were so, Abraham "would have whereof to glory." The "*wherefore*" is concerned with the whole record, the whole transaction. Here was a man who took the right way to receive sovereign blessing. He interposed nothing between the Promiser and himself. He treated the Promiser as what He is, all-sufficient and all-faithful. He opened his empty hand in that persuasion, and so, because the hand was empty, the blessing was laid upon its palm.

Ver. 23. Now it was not written only on his account, that it was reckoned to him, but also on account of us,
Ver. 24. to whom it is sure (*μέλλει*) to be reckoned, in the fixed intention of the divine Justifier, as each successive applicant comes to receive; believing as we do on the Raiser-up of Jesus our Lord from the dead; who
Ver. 25. was delivered up on account of our transgressions, and was raised up on account of our justification.

Here the great argument moves to a pause, to the cadence of a glorious rest. More and more, as we have pursued it, it has disengaged itself from the obstructions of the opponent, and advanced with a larger motion into a positive and rejoicing assertion of the joys and wealth of the believing. We have left far behind the pertinacious cavils which ask, now whether there is any hope for man outside legalism, now whether within legalism there can be any danger even for deliberate unholiness, and again whether the Gospel of gratuitous acceptance does not cancel the law of duty. We have left the Pharisee for Abraham, and have stood beside him to

look and listen. He, in the simplicity of a soul which has seen itself and seen the Lord, and so has not one word, one thought, about personal privilege, claim, or even fitness, receives a perfect acceptance in the hand of faith, and finds that the acceptance carries with it a promise of unimaginable power and blessing. And now from Abraham the Apostle turns to "*us*," "*us all*," "*us also*." His thoughts are no longer upon adversaries and objections, but on the company of the faithful, on those who are one with Abraham, and with each other, in their happy willingness to come, without a dream of merit, and take from God His mighty peace in the name of Christ. He finds himself not in synagogue or in school, disputing, but in the believing assembly, teaching, unfolding in peace the wealth of grace. He speaks to congratulate, to adore.

Let us join him there in spirit, and sit down with Aquila and Priscilla, with Nereus, and Nymphas, and Persis, and in our turn remember that "it was written for us also." Quite surely, and with a fulness of blessing which we can never find out in its perfection, to us also "*faith is sure to be reckoned, μέλλει λογίζεσθαι, as righteousness, believing as we do, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν, on the Raiser-up of Jesus our Lord*, ours also, *from the dead*." Tó us, as to them, the Father presents Himself as the Raiser-up of the Son. He is known by us in that act. It gives us His own warrant for a boundless trust in His character, His purposes, His unreserved intention to accept the sinner who comes to His feet in the name of His Crucified and Risen Son. He bids us—not forget that He is the Judge, who cannot for a moment connive. But He bids us believe, He bids us *see*, that He, being the Judge, and also the Law-Giver, has dealt with His own Law, in a way that satisfies it, that satisfies

HIMSELF. He bids us thus understand that He now "is sure to" justify, to accept, to find not guilty, to find righteous, satisfactory, the sinner who believes. He comes to us, He, this eternal Father of our Lord, to assure us, in the Resurrection, that He has sought, and has "found, a Ransom"; that He has not been prevailed upon to have mercy, a mercy behind which there may therefore lurk a gloomy reserve, but has Himself "set forth" the beloved Propitiation, and then accepted Him (not it, but Him) with the acceptance of not His word only but His deed. He is the God of Peace. How do we know it? We thought He was the God of the tribunal, and the doom. Yes; but He has "brought the great Shepherd from the dead, in the blood of the everlasting Covenant" (Heb. xiii. 20). Then, O eternal Father of our Lord, we will believe Thee; we will believe in Thee; we will, we do, in the very letter of the words Thou didst bid Thy messenger write down here, "*believe upon Thee*," *ἐπὶ τὸν Ἐγείραντα*, as in a deep repose. Truly, in *this* glorious respect, though Thou art consuming Fire, "there is nothing in Thee to dread."

"*Who was delivered up because of our transgressions.*" So dealt the Father with the Son, who gave Himself. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him"; "He spared not His own Son." "*Because of our transgressions*"; to meet the fact that we had gone astray. What, was that fact thus to be met? Was our self-will, our pride, our falsehood, our impurity, our indifference to God, our resistance to God, to be thus met? Was it to be met at all, and not rather left utterly alone to its own horrible issues? Was it eternally necessary that, if met, it must be met thus, by nothing less than the delivering up of Jesus our Lord? It was even so.

Assuredly if a milder expedient would have met our guilt, the FATHER would not have "delivered up" the SON. The Cross was nothing if not an absolute *sine quâ non.* There is that in sin, and in God, which made it eternally necessary that—if man was to be justified—the Son of God must not only live but die, and not only die but die thus, delivered up, given over to be done to death, as those who do great sin are done.

Deep in the heart of the divine doctrine of Atonement lies this element of it, the "*because of our transgressions*"; the exigency of Golgotha, due to our sins. The remission, the acquittal, the acceptance, was not a matter for the verbal *fiat* of divine autocracy. It was a matter not between God and creation, which to Him is "a little thing," but between God and His Law, that is to say, Himself, as He is eternal Judge. And this, to the Eternal, is *not* a little thing. So the solution called for no little thing, but for the Atoning Death, for the laying by the Father on the Son of the iniquities of us all, that we might open our arms and receive from the Father the merits of the Son.

"*And was raised up because of our justification;*" because our acceptance had been won, by His deliverance up. Such is the simplest explanation of the grammar, and of the import. The Lord's Resurrection appears as, so to speak, the mighty sequel, and also the demonstration, warrant, proclamation, of His acceptance as the Propitiation, and therefore of our acceptance in Him. For indeed it *was* our justification, when He paid our penalty. True, the acceptance does not accrue to the individual till he believes, and so receives. The gift is not put into the hand till it is open, and empty. But the gift has been bought ready for the

recipient long before he kneels to receive it. It was his, in provision, from the moment of the purchase; and the glorious Purchaser came up from the depths where He had gone down to buy, holding aloft in His sacred hands the golden Gift, ours because His for us.

A little while before he wrote to Rome, St Paul had written to Corinth, and the same truth was in his soul then, though it came out only passingly, while with infinite impressiveness. "If Christ is not risen, idle is your faith; you are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. xv. 17). That is to say, so the context irrefragably shews, you are yet in the guilt of your sins; you are still unjustified. "In your sins" cannot possibly there refer to the moral condition of the converts; for as a matter of fact, which no doctrine could negative, the Corinthians *were* "changed men." "In your sins" refers therefore to guilt, to law, to acceptance. And it bids them look to the Atonement as the objective *sine quâ non* for that, and to the Resurrection as the one possible, and the only necessary, warrant to faith that the Atonement had secured its end.

"*Who was delivered up; who was raised up.*" When? About twenty-five years before Paul sat dictating this sentence in the house of Gaius. There were at that moment about three hundred known living people, at least (1 Cor. xv. 6), who had seen the Risen One with open eyes, and heard Him with conscious ears. From one point of view, all was eternal, spiritual, invisible. From another point of view our salvation was as concrete, as historical, as much a thing of place and date, as the battle of Actium, or the death of Socrates. And what was done, remains done.

> "Can length of years on God Himself exact,
> And make that fiction which was once a fact?"

CHAPTER XII

PEACE, LOVE, AND JOY FOR THE JUSTIFIED

ROMANS V. 1-11

WE reached a pause in the Apostle's thought with the close of the last paragraph. We may reverently imagine, as in spirit we listen to his dictation, that a pause comes also in his work; that he is silent, and Tertius puts down the pen, and they spend their hearts awile on worshipping recollection and realization. The Lord delivered up; His people justified; the Lord risen again, alive for evermore—here was matter for love, joy, and wonder.

But the Letter must proceed, and the argument has its fullest and most wonderful developments yet to come. It has now already expounded the tremendous *need* of justifying mercy, for every soul of man. It has shewn how *faith*, always and only, is the way to appropriate that mercy—the way of God's will, and manifestly also in its own nature the way of deepest fitness. We have been allowed to see faith in illustrative action, in Abraham, who by faith, absolutely, without the least advantage of traditional privilege, received justification, with the vast concurrent blessings which it carried. Lastly we have heard St Paul dictate to Tertius, for the Romans and for us, those summarizing words (iv. 25) in which we now have God's own certifi-

cate of the triumphant efficacy of that Atoning Work, which sustains the Promise in order that the Promise may sustain us believing.

We are now to approach the glorious theme of the Life of the Justified. This is to be seen not only as a state whose basis is the reconciliation of the Law, and whose gate and walls are the covenant Promise. It is to appear as a state warmed with eternal Love; irradiated with the prospect of glory. In it the man, knit up with Christ his Head, his Bridegroom, his all, yields himself with joy to the God who has received him. In the living power of the heavenly Spirit, who perpetually delivers him from himself, he obeys, prays, works, and suffers, in a liberty which is only not yet that of heaven, and in which he is maintained to the end by Him who has planned his full personal salvation from eternity to eternity.

It has been the temptation of Christians sometimes to regard the truth and exposition of Justification as if there were a certain hardness and as it were dryness about it; as if it were a topic rather for the schools than for life. If excuses have ever been given for such a view, they must come from other quarters than the Epistle to the Romans. Christian teachers, of many periods, may have discussed Justification as coldly as if they were writing a law-book. Or again they may have examined it as if it were a truth terminating in itself, the Omega as well as the Alpha of salvation; and then it has been misrepresented, of course. For the Apostle certainly does not discuss it drily; he lays deep indeed the foundations of Law and Atonement, but he does it in the manner of a man who is not drawing the plan of a refuge, but calling his reader from the tempest into what is not only a refuge but a home.

And again he does not discuss it in isolation. He spends his fullest, largest, and most loving expositions on its intense and vital connexion with concurrent truths. He is about now to take us, through a noble vestibule, into the sanctuary of the life of the accepted, the life of union, of surrender, of the Holy Ghost.

Ver. 1. **Justified therefore on terms of faith,* we have peace † towards our** (*τὸν*) **God,** we possess in regard of Him the "quietness and assurance" of acceptance, **through our Lord Jesus Christ,** thus delivered up,

Ver. 2. and raised up, for us; **through whom we have actually** (*καὶ*) **found ‡ our** (*τὴν*) **introduction,** our free admission, **by our** (*τῇ*) **faith, into this grace,** this unearned acceptance for Another's sake, **in which we stand,** instead of falling ruined, sentenced, at the tribunal. **And we exult,** not with the sinful "boasting" § of the legalist, **but in hope** (literally, "*on hope*," *ἐπ' ἐλπίδι*, as *reposing on* the promised prospect) **of the glory of our** (*τοῦ*) **God,** the light of the heavenly vision and fruition of our Justifier, and the splendour of an eternal service of

Ver. 3. Him in that fruition. **Nor only so, but we exult too in our tribulations,** with a better fortitude than the Stoic's artificial serenity, **knowing** that the tribulation works out, develops, patient persistency, ‖ as it occasions proof after proof of the power

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* Ἐκ πίστεως: "*out of faith.*" The phrase has often met us in the Greek before. It calls for various renderings in various contexts; that given above seems best to paraphrase it here.

† See detached note, p. 140, for an account of the various reading here, ἔχωμεν εἰρήνην, "*Let us* have peace."

‡ Ἐσχήκαμεν: "*we have had*," "*we have got.*"

§ Καυχᾶσθαι, καύχησις: see above ii. 23, iii. 27, iv. 2.

‖ Ὑπομονή is more than "*patience.*" By usage it implies "*patience in action*"; "*perseverance.*"

of God in our weakness, and thus generates *the habit* of reliance; and then (δὲ) the patient persistency develops proof, brings out in experience, as a proved fact, that through Christ we are not what we were; and then the proof develops hope, solid and definite expectation of continuing grace and final glory, and, in particular, of the Lord's Return; and the hope does not shame, does not disappoint; it is a hope sure and steadfast, for it is the hope of those who now know that they are objects of eternal Love; because the love of our (τοῦ) God has been poured out in our hearts; His love to us has been as it were diffused through our consciousness, poured out in a glad experience as rain from the cloud, as floods from the rising spring,* through the Holy Spirit that was given to us.

Here first is mentioned explicitly, in the Apostle's argument, (we do not reckon ch. i. 4 as in the argument,) the blessed Spirit, the Lord the Holy Ghost. Hitherto the occasion for the mention has hardly arisen. The considerations have been mainly upon the personal guilt of the sinner, and the objective fact of the Atonement, and the exercise of faith, of trust in God, as a genuine personal act of man. With a definite purpose, we may reverently think, the discussion of faith has been kept thus far clear of the thought of anything lying behind faith, of any "grace" *giving* faith. For whether or no faith is the gift of God, it is most certainly the act of man; none should assert this more decidedly than

* It is quite possible, of course, to explain ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ, grammatically, to mean "*our love to God.*" And some, more mystically, explain it of God's faculty of love conveyed to us that we, with it, may love Him. But the following context, especially ver. 8, is clearly against such expositions. Verses 6-11 are in fact an explanation of the thought of ver. 5.

those who hold (as we do) that Eph. ii. 8 * *does* teach that where saving faith is, it is there because God has "given" it. But how does He "give" it? Not, surely, by implanting a new faculty, but by so opening the soul to God in Christ that the divine magnet effectually draws the man to a willing repose upon such a God. But the man does this, as an act, himself. He trusts God as genuinely, as personally, as much with his own faculty of trust, as he trusts a man whom he sees to be quite trustworthy and precisely fit to meet an imperative need. Thus it is often the work of the evangelist and the teacher to insist upon the *duty* rather than the *grace* of faith; to bid men rather thank God for faith *when they have believed* than wait for the sense of an afflatus before believing. And is this not what St Paul does here? At this point of his argument, *and not before*, he reminds the believer that his possession of peace, of happiness, of hope, has been attained and realized not, ultimately, of himself but through the working of the Eternal Spirit. The insight into mercy, into a propitiation provided by divine love, and so into the holy secret of the divine love itself, has been given him by the Holy Ghost, who has taken of the things of Christ, and shewn them to him, and secretly handled his "heart" so that the fact of the love of God is a part of experience at last. The man has been told of his great need, and of the sure and open refuge, and has stepped through its peaceful gate in the act of trusting the message and the will of God. Now he is asked to look round, to look back, and bless the hand which, when he was outside in the

* The writer ventures to refer to his Commentary on Ephesians in *The Cambridge Bible.*

naked field of death, opened his eyes to see, and guided his will to choose.

What a retrospect it is! Let us trace it from the first words of this paragraph again. First, here is the *sure fact* of our acceptance, and the reason of it, and the method. "*Therefore*"; let not that word be forgotten. Our Justification is no arbitrary matter, whose causelessness suggests an illusion, or a precarious peace. "*Therefore*"; it rests upon an antecedent, in the logical chain of divine facts. We have read that antecedent, ch. iv. 25; "Jesus our Lord was given up because of our transgressions, and was raised up because of our justification." We assented to that fact; we have accepted Him, only and altogether, in this work of His. *Therefore* we are justified, δικαιωθέντες,* placed by an act of divine Love, working in the line of divine Law, among those whom the Judge accepts, that He may embrace them as Father. Then, in this possession of the "peace" of our acceptance, thus *led in* (προσαγωγή), through the gate of the promise, with the footstep of faith, we find inside our Refuge far more than merely safety. We look up from within the blessed walls, sprinkled with atoning blood, and we see above them the hope of glory, invisible outside. And we turn to our present life within them (for all our life is to be lived within that broad sanctuary now), and we find resources provided there for a present as well as a prospective joy. We address ourselves to the discipline of the place; for it *has* its discipline; the refuge is home, but it is also school; and we find, when we begin to try it, that the discipline is full of joy. It brings out into a joyful consciousness the power we now have, in Him

* Observe the aorist form of the participle.

who has accepted us, in Him who is our Acceptance, to suffer and to serve in love. Our life has become a life not of peace only but of the hope which animates peace, and makes it flow "as a river." From hour to hour we enjoy the never-disappointing hope of "grace for grace," new grace for the next new need; and beyond it, and above it, the certainties of the hope of glory. To drop our metaphor of the sanctuary for that of the pilgrimage, we find ourselves upon a pathway, steep and rocky, but always mounting into purer air, and so as to shew us nobler prospects; and at the summit—the pathway will be continued, and transfigured, into the golden street of the City; the same track, but within the gate of heaven.

Into all this the Holy Ghost has led us. He has been at the heart of the whole internal process. He made the thunder of the Law articulate to our conscience. He gave us faith by manifesting Christ. And, in Christ, He has "poured out in our hearts the love of God."

For now the Apostle takes up that word, "*the Love of God*," and holds it to our sight, and we see in its pure glory no vague abstraction, but the face, and the work, of Jesus Christ. Such is the context into which we now advance. He is reasoning on; "*For* Christ, when we still were weak." He has set justification before us in its majestic lawfulness. But he has now to expand its mighty love, of which the Holy Ghost has made us conscious in our hearts. We are to see in the Atonement not only a guarantee that we have a valid title to a just acceptance. We are to see in it the love of the Father and the Son, so that not our security only but our bliss may be full.

Ver. 6. For Christ, we still being weak, (gentle euphemism for our utter impotence, our guilty inability to meet the sinless claim of the Law of God,) in season, in the fulness of time, when the ages of precept and of failure had done their work, and man had learnt something to purpose of the lesson of self-despair, for the ungodly—died. "*For the ungodly*," ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν, "*concerning them*," "with reference to them," that is to say, in this context of saving mercy, "in their interests, for their rescue,* as their propitiation." "*The ungodly*," or, more literally still, without the article, "*ungodly ones*"; a designation general and inclusive for those for whom He died. Above (iv. 5) we saw the word used with a certain limitation, as of the worst among the sinful. But here, surely, with a solemn paradox, it covers the whole field of the Fall. The ungodly here are not the flagrant and disreputable only; they are all who are not in harmony with God; the potential as well as the actual doers of grievous sin. For them "*Christ died*"; not "lived," let us remember, but "died." It was a question not of example, nor of suasion, nor even of utterances of divine compassion. It was a question of law and guilt; and it was to be met only by the death-sentence and the death-fact; such death as He died of whom, a little while before, this same Correspondent had written to the converts of

* Ὑπὲρ is literally "*over*," and in itself imports simply "*concern with*"; as when we say that a man is busy "over" an important matter; as it were stooping over it, attending to it. Its special references depend altogether upon context and usage. *In itself* it neither teaches nor denies the doctrine of a vicarious and substitutionary work; ἀντὶ is the preposition which guarantees as true that great aspect of the Lord's death. But ὑπὲρ of course amply allows for such an *application* of its meaning, where the context suggests the idea.

Galatia (iii. 13); "Christ bought us out from the curse of the Law, when He became a curse for us." All the untold emphasis of the sentence, and of the thought, lies here upon those last words, upon each and all of them, "*for ungodly ones—He died,*" *ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν—ἀπέθανε.* The sequel shews this to us; he proceeds: For scarcely,

Ver. 7. with difficulty, and in rare instances, for a just man will one die; "*scarcely,*" he will not say "*never,*" for for the good man, the man answering in some measure the ideal of gracious and not only of legal

Ver. 8. goodness,* perhaps someone actually ventures to die. But God commends, as by a glorious contrast (*συνίστησι*), His love, "*His*" as above all current human love, "*His own love,*" *τὴν Ἑαυτοῦ*, towards us, because while we were still sinners, and as such repulsive to the Holy One, Christ for us did die.

We are not to read this passage as if it were a statistical assertion as to the facts of human love and its possible sacrifices. The moral argument will not be affected if we are able, as we shall be, to adduce cases where unregenerate man has given even his life to save the life of one, or of many, to whom he is not emotionally or naturally attracted. All that is necessary to St Paul's tender plea for the love of God is the certain fact that the cases of death even on behalf of one who *morally deserves* a great sacrifice are relatively very, very few. The thought of merit is the ruling thought in the connexion. He labours to bring out the sovereign Lovingkindness, which went even to the length and depth of death, by reminding us that, what-

* We incline more than formerly, though still with some doubt, to see a rising climax here, as indicated in the paraphrase, from *δίκαιου* to *ὁ ἀγαθόν*.

ever moved it, it was not moved, even in the lowest imaginable degree, by any merit, no, nor by any "congruity," in us. And yet we were sought, and saved. He who planned the salvation, and provided it, was the eternal Lawgiver and Judge. He who loved us is Himself eternal Right, to whom all our wrong is unutterably repellent. What then is He as Love, who, being also Right, stays not till He has given His Son to the death of the Atonement?

So we have indeed a warrant to "believe the love of God" (1 John iv. 16). Yes, to believe it. We look within us, and it is incredible. If we have really seen ourselves, we have seen ground for a sorrowful conviction that He who is eternal Right must view us with aversion. But if we have really seen Christ, we have seen ground for—not feeling at all, it may be, at this moment, but—believing that God is Love, and loves us. What is it to believe Him? It is to take Him at His word; to act altogether not upon our internal consciousness but upon His warrant. We look at the Cross, or rather, we look at the crucified Lord Jesus in His Resurrection; we read at His feet these words of His Apostle; and we go away to take God at His assurance that we, unlovely, are beloved.

"My child," said a dying French saint, as she gave a last embrace to her daughter, "I have loved you because of what you are; my heavenly Father, to whom I go, has loved me *malgrè moi*."

And how does the divine reasoning now advance? "From glory to glory"; from acceptance by the Holy One, who is Love, to present and endless preservation in His Beloved One. Therefore much more, justified now in His blood, as it were "*in*" its laver of ablution, or again "*within*" its circle of

Ver. 9.

sprinkling as it marks the precincts of our inviolable sanctuary, we shall be kept safe through Him, who now lives to administer the blessings of His death, from the wrath, the wrath of God, in its present imminence over the head of the unreconciled, and in its final fall "in that day." For if, being enemies, with no initial love to Him who is Love, nay, when we were hostile to His claims, and as such subject to the hostility of His Law, we were reconciled to our (τῷ) God * through the death of His Son, (God coming to judicial peace with us, and we brought to submissive peace with Him,) much more, being reconciled, we shall be kept safe in His life, in the life of the Risen One who now lives for us, and in us, and we in Him. Nor only so, but we shall be kept exulting too in our (τοῦ) God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom now we have received † this (τὴν) reconciliation.

Ver. 10.

Ver. 11.

Here, by anticipation, he indicates already the mighty issues of the act of Justification, in our life of Union with the Lord who died for us, and lived again. In the sixth chapter this will be more fully unfolded; but he cannot altogether reserve it so long. As he has advanced from the law-aspect of our acceptance to its love-aspect, so now with this latter he gives us at once the life-aspect, our vital incorporation with our Redeemer, our part and lot in His resurrection-life. Nowhere in this whole Epistle is that subject expounded so fully as in the later Epistles, Colossians and Ephesians; the Inspirer led His servant all over that region then, in his Roman prison, but not now. But He had brought him into the region from the first, and we see it here

* On the meaning of καταλλαγή see detached note, p. 141.

† Ἐλάβομεν: but the English perfect best represents the idea.

present to his thought, though not in the foreground of his discourse. "*Kept safe in His life*"; not "*by*" His life, but "*in*" His life. We are livingly knit to Him the Living One. From one point of view we are accused men, at the bar, wonderfully transformed, by the Judge's provision, into welcomed and honoured friends of the Law and the Lawgiver. From another point of view we are dead men, in the grave, wonderfully vivified, and put into a spiritual connexion with the mighty life of our Lifegiving Redeemer. The aspects are perfectly distinct. They belong to different orders of thought. Yet they are in the closest and most genuine relation. The Justifying Sacrifice procures the possibility of our regeneration into the Life of Christ. Our union by faith with the Lord who died and lives brings us into actual part and lot in His justifying merits. And our part and lot in those merits, our "acceptance in the Beloved," assures us again of the permanence of the mighty Love which will maintain us in our part and lot "in His life." This is the view of the matter which is before us here.

Thus the Apostle meets our need on every side. He shews us the holy Law satisfied for us. He shews us the eternal Love liberated upon us. He shews us the Lord's own Life clasped around us, imparted to us; "our life is hid in God with Christ, who is our Life" (Col. iii. 3, 4). Shall we not "exult in God through Him"?

And now we are to learn something of that great Covenant-Headship, in which we and He are one.

Detached Notes to Chapter XII

I

Εἰρήνην ἔχομεν, "*We have peace*": *Εἰρήνην ἔχωμεν*, "*Let us have peace.*" Which did St Paul write? On the whole, after long thought upon the evidence, we decide for the former reading. The documentary witness is strong for the latter. For those who place the great Uncial manuscripts in the place of practical decision, *ἔχωμεν* has a clear verdict in its favour. But the other class of copies, the Cursive, later on the whole than the Uncials, but probably often representing correction rather than corruption, are greatly in favour of *ἔχομεν*. The evidence of ancient Versions, and of quotations by early Christian writers, inclines on the whole for *ἔχωμεν*. But in the study of a reading the argument and context of course claim attention; for most surely the original reading, whatever it was, was *pertinent*. Now here the question of *pertinence* seems to us to lead to a decided verdict for *ἔχομεν*. The Apostle is engaged here altogether with assertion, instruction; exhortation is to come later. Through this whole paragraph he does nothing but assert facts and principles. Is it to be believed that he begins it with a *disjointed* exhortation?

In *itself* the exhortation would bear a meaning perfectly intelligible. "*Let us have peace*" would mean "*Let us enjoy peace.*" So *ἔχωμεν χάριν*, Heb. xii. 28, means, practically, "*Let us use grace.*" Neither exhortation would mean that we *do not yet possess*, in respect of the Lord's gift, "peace" and "grace" res-

pectively. But, we repeat it, the context here seems decisive against the presence *here* of any exhortation. We want, logically, assertion.

The interchange of ω and ο in manuscripts is, as a fact, frequent.

See the case carefully considered, and decided for ἔχομεν, in Dr Scrivener's *Introduction to the Criticism of the N. T.*, p. 625.

II

Καταλλάσσειν, Καταλλαγή. It is sometimes held that these words denote "reconciliation" in the sense of man's laying aside his distrust, reluctance, resistance towards God, not of God's laying aside His holy displeasure against man; and that for this latter idea, that of persuading an offended superior to grant peace, we should need the words διαλλάσσεσθαι (which we have Matt. v. 24, and in the Lxx. in *e.g.* 1 Sam. xxix. 4, where the English has, "Wherewith should he reconcile himself to his master?") and διαλλαγὴ (which does not occur in the N. T.). But καταλλαγὴ (and its verb) is as a fact used in the Greek of the Apocrypha in connexions where the thought is just that of the clemency of a king, induced to pardon. See *e.g.* 2 Macc. v. 20, where the English Version reads, "the great Lord *being reconciled* (ἐν τῇ καταλλαγῇ τοῦ μεγάλου Δεσπότου) [the temple] was set up." So 2 Macc. i. 5, where we have the prayer (English Version), "God be *at one* with you," καταλλαγείη ὑμῖν. Thus no elaborate distinction can safely be drawn between the two sets of compounds. And there is no place in the N. T. where the meaning, *conciliation of an offended party*, would not well suit καταλλάσσεσθαι, etc. The present passage

(Rom. v. 10, 11) would be practically meaningless otherwise. The whole thought is of the divine mercy, providing a way for accepting grace. To "*receive* τὴν καταλλαγὴν" is a phrase which, by its very form as well as its connexion, points to the thought not of reluctance overcome but mercy found.

The word "*atonement*" (A.V., ver. 11) needs remark. It seems certain that its derivation is "at-one-ment" (See Skeat, *Etymol. Dict.*, s.v.), though an etymological connexion with *ver-söhnen*, (Dutch, *ver-zoenen*) has been maintained (see Hofmeyr, *The Blessed Life*, p. 25). But as Trench remarks, (*Synonyms of the N. T.*, s.v. καταλλαγὴ,) the usage of English has now long attached the idea of *propitiation* (ἱλασμὸς) to the word "*atonement*"; which should therefore be avoided as a rendering for καταλλαγή.

CHAPTER XIII

CHRIST AND ADAM

ROMANS v. 12-21

WE approach a paragraph of the Epistle pregnant with mystery. It leads us back to Primal Man, to the Adam of the first brief pages of the Scripture record, to his encounter with the suggestion to follow himself rather than his Maker, to his sin, and then to the results of that sin in his race. We shall find those results given in terms which certainly we should not have devised *à priori*. We shall find the Apostle teaching, or rather stating, for he writes as to those who know, that mankind inherits from primal Man, tried and fallen, not only taint but guilt, not only moral hurt but legal fault.

This is "a thing heard in the darkness." It has been said that Holy Scripture "is not a sun, but a lamp." The words may be grievously misused, by undue emphasis on the negative clause; but they convey a sure truth, used aright. Nowhere does the divine Book undertake to tell us all about everything it contains. It undertakes to tell us truth, and to tell it from God. It undertakes to give us pure light, yea, "to bring life and immortality out into the light," (2 Tim. i. 10). But it reminds us that we know "in part," and that even prophecy, even the inspired

message, is "in part" (1 Cor. xiii. 9). It illuminates immensely much, but it leaves yet more to be seen hereafter. It does not yet kindle the whole firmament and the whole landscape like an oriental sun. It sheds its glory upon our Guide, and upon our path.

A passage like this calls for such recollections. It tells us, with the voice of the Apostle's Lord, great facts about our own race, and its relations to its primeval Head, such that every individual man has a profound moral and also judicial *nexus* with the first Man. It does not tell us how those inscrutable but solid facts fit into the whole plan of God's creative wisdom and moral government. The lamp shines *there*, upon the edges of a deep ravine beside the road; it does not shine sunlike over the whole mountain-land.

As with other mysteries which will meet us later, so with this; we approach it as those who "know in part," and who know that the apostolic Prophet, by no defect of inspiration, but by the limits of the case, "prophesies in part." Thus with awful reverence, with godly fear, and free from the wish to explain away, yet without anxiety lest God should be proved unrighteous, we listen as Paul dictates, and receive his witness about our fall and our guilt in that mysterious "First Father."

We remember also another fact of this case. This paragraph deals only incidentally with Adam; its main theme is Christ. Adam is the illustration; Christ is the subject. We are to be shewn in Adam, by contrast, some of "the unsearchable riches of Christ." So that our main attention is called not to the brief outline of the mystery of the Fall, but to the assertions of the related splendour of the Redemption.

St Paul is drawing again to a close, a cadence. He

is about to conclude his exposition of the Way of Acceptance, and to pass to its junction with the Way of Holiness. And he shews us here last, in the matter of Justification, this fragment from "the bottoms of the mountains"—the union of the justified with their redeeming Lord as race with Head; the *nexus* in that respect between them and Him which makes His "righteous act" of such infinite value to them. In the previous paragraph, as we have seen, he has gravitated toward the deeper regions of the blessed subject; he has indicated our connexion with the Lord's Life as well as with His Merit. Now, recurring to the thought of the Merit, he still tends to the depths of truth, and Christ our Righteousness is lifted before our eyes from those pure depths as not the Propitiation only, but the Propitiation who is also our Covenant-Head, our Second Adam, holding His mighty merits for a new race, bound up with Himself in the bond of a real unity.

He "prophesies in part," meanwhile, even in respect of this element of his message. As we saw just above, the fullest explanations of our union with the Lord Christ *in His life* were reserved by St Paul's Master for other Letters than this. In the present passage we have not, what probably we should have had if the Epistle had been written five years later, a definite statement of the connexion between our Union with Christ in His covenant and our Union with Him in His life; a connexion deep, necessary, significant. It is not quite absent from this passage, if we read verses 17, 18, aright; but it is not prominent. The main thought is of merit, righteousness, acceptance; of covenant, of law. As we have said, this paragraph is the climax of the Epistle to the Romans as to its doctrine of our peace with God through the merits of His Son. It is

enough for the purpose of that subject that it should indicate, and only indicate, the doctrine that His Son is also our Life, our indwelling Cause and Spring of purity and power.

Recollecting thus the scope and the connexion of the passage, let us listen to its wording.

Ver. 12. **On this account,** on account of the aspects of our justification and reconciliation "through our Lord Jesus Christ" which he has just presented, it is * **just as through one man sin entered into the world,** the world of man, **and, through sin, death, and so to all men death travelled,** διῆλθε, penetrated, pervaded, **inasmuch as all sinned**; the Race sinning in its Head, the Nature in its representative Bearer. The facts of human life and death shew that sin *did* thus pervade

Ver. 13. the race, as to liability, and as to penalty: **For until law came sin was in the world**; it was present all along, in the ages previous to the great Legislation. But sin is not imputed, is not put down as debt for penalty, where law does not exist, where in no sense is there statute to be obeyed or broken, whether

Ver. 14. that statute takes articulate expression or not.† **But death became king** (ἐβασίλευσεν), **from Adam down to Moses, even over those who did not sin on the model of the transgression of Adam—who is** (in the

* It will be seen that we assume, between διὰ τοῦτο and ὥσπερ, some such implied thought as "*the case stands.*" We think it may be thus grammatically; and that even if a less simple explanation of the *construction* is adopted, such an insertion gives the import of the whole passage aright.

† It will be seen that the rapid steps of thought lead, in this one verse, from one meaning of the word "*law*" to another. He means that there was sin before the Code of the Decalogue, but not therefore before God had, in some degree, expressed His royal will, and man had broken it.

present tense of the plan of God) pattern of the Coming One.

He argues from the fact of death, and from its universality, which implies a universality of liability, of guilt. According to the Scriptures, death is essentially *penal* in the case of man, who was created not to die but to live. How that purpose would have been fulfilled if "the image of God" had not sinned against Him, we do not know. We need not think that the fulfilment would have violated any natural process; higher processes might have governed the case, in perfect harmony with the surroundings of terrestrial life, till perhaps that life was transfigured, as by a necessary development, into the celestial and immortal. But however, the record *does* connect, for man, the fact of death with the fact of sin, offence, transgression. And the fact of death is universal, and so has been from the first. And thus it includes generations most remote from the knowledge of a revealed *code*. And it includes individuals most incapable of a conscious act of transgression such as Adam's was; it includes the heathen, and the infant, and the imbecile. Therefore wherever there is human nature, since Adam fell, there is sin, in its form of guilt. And therefore, in some sense which perhaps only the supreme Theologian Himself fully knows, but which we can follow a little way, all men offended in the First Man—so favourably conditioned, so gently tested. The guilt contracted by him is possessed also by them. And thus is he "the pattern of the Coming One."

For now the glorious Coming One, the Seed of the Woman, the blessed Lord of the Promise, rises on the view, in His likeness and in His contrast. Writing to Corinth from Macedonia, about a year before, St Paul

had called him (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47) "the Second Adam," "the Second Man"; and had drawn in outline the parallel he here elaborates. "In Adam all die; even so in Christ all shall be made alive." It was a thought which he had learned in Judaism,* but which his Master had affirmed to him in Christianity; and noble indeed and far-reaching is its use of it in this exposition of the sinner's hope.

Ver. 15. **But not as the transgression, so the gracious gift** (χάρισμα). **For if, by the transgression of the one, the many,** the many affected by it, died, **much rather did the grace of God,** His benignant action, **and the gift,** the grant of our acceptance, **in the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ,** ("*in* His grace," because *involved in* His benignant action, in His redeeming work) **abound unto the many** whom it, whom He, affected.

We observe here some of the phrases in detail. "*The One*"; "*the One Man*":—"*the* one," in each case, is related to "*the* many" involved, in bane or in blessing respectively. "The One *Man*":—so the Second Adam is designated, not the First. As to the First, "it goes unsaid" that he is man. As to the Second, it is infinitely wonderful, and of eternal import, that He, as truly, as completely, is one with us, is Man of men. "*Much rather did* the grace, and the gift, *abound*":—the thought given here is that while the dread sequel of the Fall was solemnly *permitted*, as good in law, the sequel of the divine counter-work was gladly *sped* by the Lord's willing love, and was carried to a glorious overflow, to an altogether unmerited effect, in the

* See Schöttgen, *Horæ Hebraicæ*, on 1 Cor. xv. 45. He quotes from the Rabbis: "As the First Adam was one, was first, אחד, in sin, so Messiah shall be the last, האחרן, for the utter taking away of sins."

present and eternal blessing of the justified. "*The many*," twice mentioned in this verse, are the whole company which, in each case, stands related to the respective Representative. It is the whole race in the case of the Fall; it is the "many brethren" of the Second Adam in the case of the Reconciliation. The question is not of numerical comparison between the two, but of the numerousness of each host in relation to the oneness of its covenant Head. What the numerousness of the "many brethren" will be we know—and we do not know; for it will be "a great multitude, which no one can number." But that is not in the question here. The emphasis, the "*much rather*," the "*abundance*," lies not on the compared numbers, but on the amplitude of the blessing which overflows upon "the many" from the justifying work of the One.

He proceeds, developing the thought. From the act of each Representative, from Adam's Fall and Christ's Atonement, there issued results of dominion, of royalty. But what was the contrast of the cases! In the Fall, the sin of the One brought upon "the many" judgment, sentence, and the reign of death over them. In the Atonement, the righteousness of the One brought upon "the many" an "abundance," an overflow, a generous largeness and love of acceptance, and the power of life eternal, and a prerogative of royal rule over sin and death; the emancipated captives treading upon their tyrants' necks. We follow out the Apostle's wording:

Ver. 16. **And not as through the one who sinned, who fell, so is the gift**; our acceptance in our Second Head does not follow the law of mere and strict retribution which appears in our fall in our first Head.

(For, he adds in emphatic parenthesis, **the judgment** did issue, from one transgression,* **in condemnation,** in sentence of death; but **the gracious gift** issued, **from** many transgressions,—not indeed as if earned by them, as if caused by them, but as *occasioned* by them; for this wonderful process of mercy found in our sins, as well as in our Fall, a *reason* for the Cross—**in a deed**
Ver. 17. **of justification.**)† **For if in one transgression,**‡ "*in*" it, as the effect is involved in its cause, **death came to reign** (ἐβασίλευσε) **through the one offender,**§ **much rather those who are receiving,** in their successive cases and generations, **that** (τὴν) **abundance of the grace** just spoken of (ver. 15: χάρις, ἐπερίσσευσε), **and of the free gift of righteousness,** of acceptance, **shall, in life,** life eternal, begun now, to end never, **reign** over their former tyrants **through the One,** their glorious One, **Jesus Christ.**

And now he sums up the whole in one comprehensive inference and affirmation. "*The One*," "*the many*"; "*the One*," "*the all*"; the whole mercy for the all due to the one work of the One;—such is the ground-thought all along. It is illustrated by "*the one*" and "*the many*" of the Fall, but still so as to throw the real weight of every word not upon the Fall but upon

* So we interpret ἑνὸς, in the light of the πολλὰ παραπτώματα just below.

† Δικαίωμα: the form of the word indicates not a process, or a principle, but an act. Apparently, by context, it may mean either a moral act of righteousness (see Rev. xix. 8, and perhaps below, ver. 18), or a legal "act and deed" of acceptance. The parallel with κατάκριμα pleads here for the latter.

‡ We adopt the reading ἐν ἑνί. The other, τῷ τοῦ ἑνὸς, amounts to the same import, but without the pregnant force of the word "*in*."

§ We supply this word, and not "*transgression*," because of the parallel just below, "*the One, Jesus Christ*."

the Acceptance. Here, as throughout this paragraph, we should greatly mistake if we thought that the illustration and the object illustrated were to be pressed, detail by detail, into one mould. To cite an instance to the contrary, we are certainly not to take him to mean that because Adam's "*many*" are not only fallen in him, but actually guilty, therefore Christ's "*many*" are not only accepted in Him, but actually and personally meritorious of acceptance. The whole Epistle negatives that thought. Nor again are we to think, as we ponder ver. 18, that because "*the condemnation*" was "*to all men*" in the sense of their being not only condemnable but actually condemned, therefore "*the justification of life*" was "*to all men*" in the sense that all mankind are actually justified. Here again the whole Epistle, and the whole message of St Paul about our acceptance, are on the other side. The provision is for the *genus*, for man; but the possession is for men—who believe.* No; these great details in the parallel need our reverent caution, lest we think peace where there is, and can be, none. The force of the parallel lies in the broader and deeper factors of the two matters. It lies in the mysterious phenomenon of covenant headship, as affecting both our Fall and our Acceptance; in the power upon the many, in each case, of the deed of the One; and then

* As to the universality of *the offer*, it is interesting and important to find Calvin thus writing, on ver. 18:—Communem omnium gratiam fecit, quia omnibus exposita est, non quod ad omnes extendatur re ipsa. Nam etsi passus est Christus pro peccatis totius mundi, atque omnibus indifferenter Dei benignitate offertur, non tamen omnes apprehendunt. "The Lord," thus says the great French expositor, "suffered for the sins of the whole world," and "is offered impartially to all in the kindness of God."

in the magnificent fulness and positiveness of result in the case of our salvation. In our Fall, sin merely *worked itself out* into doom and death. In our Acceptance, the Judge's award is positively crowned and as it were loaded with gifts and treasures. It brings with it, in ways not described here, but amply shewn in other Scriptures, a living union with a Head who is our life, and in whom we possess already the powers of heavenly being in their essence. It brings with it not only the approval of the Law, but accession to a throne. The justified sinner is a king already, in his Head, over the power of sin, over the fear of death. And he is on his way to a royalty in the eternal future which shall make him great indeed, great in his Lord.

The absolute dependence of our justification upon the Atoning Act of our Head, and the relation of our Head to us accordingly as our Centre and our Root of blessing, this is the main message of the passage we are tracing. The mystery of our congenital guilt is there, though it is only incidentally there. And after all what is that mystery? It is assuredly a fact. The statement of this paragraph, that the many were "constituted sinners by the disobedience of the one," what is it? It is the Scripture expression, and in some guarded sense the Scripture explanation, of a consciousness deep as the awakened soul of man; that I, a member of this homogeneous race, made in God's image, not only have sinned, but have been a sinful being from my first personal beginning; and that I ought not to be so, and ought never to have been so. It is my calamity, but it is also my accusation. This I cannot explain; but this I know. And to know this, with a knowledge that is not merely speculative but

moral, is to be "shut up unto Christ," in a self-despair which can go nowhere else than to Him for acceptance, for peace, for holiness, for power.

Let us translate, as they stand, the closing sentences before us:

Ver. 18. **Accordingly therefore, as through one transgression** there came a result **to all men, to condemnation,** to sentence of death, **so through one deed of righteousness** * **there came a result to all men,** (to "*all*" in the sense we have indicated, so that whoever of mankind receives the acceptance owes it always and wholly to the Act of Christ,) **to justification of life,** to an acceptance which not only bids the guilty "not die," but opens to the accepted the secret, in Him who is their Sacrifice, of powers which live in Him for them as He is their Life.

Ver. 19. **For as, by the disobedience of the one man, the many,** the many of that case, **were constituted sinners,** constituted guilty of the fall of their nature from God, so that their being sinful is not only their calamity but their sin, **so too by the obedience of the One,** "not according to their works," that is, to their conduct, past, present, or to come, but "*by the obedience of the One*," **the many,** His "many brethren," His Father's children through faith in Him, **shall be,** as each comes to Him in all time, and then by the final open proclamation of eternity, **constituted righteous,** qualified for the acceptance of the holy Judge.

Before he closes this page of his message, and turns the next, he has as it were a parenthetic word to say,

* Δικαίωμα: see note above, p. 150. It seems to us almost equally possible to explain this word here (as in our translation) of the Lord's Atoning Act, satisfying the Law for us, and of the Accepting "Act and Deed" of the Father, declaring Him accepted, and us in Him.

indicating a theme to be discussed more largely later. It is the function of the Law, the moral place of the preceptive *Fiat*, in view of this wonderful Acceptance of the guilty. He has suggested the question already, iii. 31; he will treat some aspects of it more fully later. But it is urgent here to enquire at least this, Was Law a mere anomaly, impossible to put into relation with justifying grace? Might it have been as well out of the way, never heard of in the human world? No, God forbid. One deep purpose of acceptance was to glorify the Law, making the preceptive Will of God as dear to the justified as it is terrible to the guilty. But now, besides this, it has a function antecedent as well as consequent to justification. Applied as positive precept to the human will in the Fall, what does it do? It does not create sinfulness; God forbid. Not God's will but the creature's will did that. But it occasions sin's declaration of war. It brings out the latent rebellion of the will. It forces the disease to the surface—merciful force, for it shews the sick man his danger, and it gives point to his Physician's words of warning and of hope. It reveals to the criminal his guilt; as it is sometimes found that information of a statutory human penalty awakens a malefactor's conscience in the midst of a half-unconscious course of crime. And so it brings out to the opening eyes of the soul the wonder of the remedy in Christ. He sees the Law; he sees himself; and now at last it becomes a profound reality to him to see the Cross. He believes, adores, and loves. The merit of his Lord covers his demerit, as the waters the sea. And he passes from the dread but salutary view of "the reign" of sin over him, in a death he cannot fathom, to submit to "the reign" of grace, in life, in death, for ever.

Ver. 20. **Now law came sideways in**; law in its largest sense, as it affects the fallen, but with a special reference, doubtless, to its articulation at Sinai. It came in "*sideways*," as to its relation to our acceptance; as a thing which should *indirectly* promote it, by not causing but occasioning the blessing; **that the transgression might abound**, that sin, that sins, in the most inclusive sense, might develop the latent evil, and as it were expose it to the work of grace. **But where the sin** multiplied, in the place, the region, of fallen humanity, **there did superabound the grace**; with that mighty overflow of the bright ocean of love which we have watched already.

Ver. 21. **That just as our** (ἡ) **sin came to reign in our** (τῷ) death, our penal death, **so too might the grace come to reign**, having its glorious way against our foes and over us, **through righteousness**, through the justifying work, **to life eternal**, which here we have, and which hereafter will receive us into itself, **through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

"The last words of Mr Honest were, *Grace reigns*. So he left the world." Let us walk with the same watchword through the world, till we too, crossing that Jordan, lean with a final simplicity of faith upon "the obedience of the One."

CHAPTER XIV

JUSTIFICATION AND HOLINESS

ROMANS vi. 1-13

IN a certain sense, St Paul has done now with the exposition of Justification. He has brought us on, from his denunciation of human sin, and his detection of the futility of mere privilege, to propitiation, to faith, to acceptance, to love, joy, and hope, and finally to our mysterious but real connexion in all this blessing with Him who won our peace. From this point onwards we shall find many mentions of our acceptance, and of its Cause; we shall come to some memorable mentions very soon. But we shall not hear the holy subject itself any more treated and expounded. It will underlie the following discussions everywhere; it will as it were surround them, as with a sanctuary wall. But we shall now think less directly of the foundations than of the superstructure, for which the foundation was laid. We shall be less occupied with the fortifications of our holy city than with the resources they contain, and with the life which is to be lived, on those resources, within the walls.

Everything will cohere. But the transition will be marked, and will call for our deepest, and let us add, our most reverent and supplicating thought.

"We need not, then, be holy, if such is your pro-

gramme of acceptance." Such was the objection, bewildered or deliberate, which St Paul heard in his soul at this pause in his dictation; he had doubtless often heard it with his ears. Here was a wonderful provision for the free and full acceptance of 'the ungodly" by the eternal Judge. It was explained and stated so as to leave no room for human virtue as a commendatory merit. Faith itself was no commendatory virtue. It was not "a work," but the antithesis to "works." Its power was not in itself but in its Object. It was itself only the void which received "the obedience of the One" as the sole meriting cause of peace with God. Then—may we not live on in sin, and yet be in His favour now, and in His heaven hereafter?

Let us recollect, as we pass on, one important lesson of these recorded objections to the great first message of St Paul. They tell us, incidentally, how explicit and unreserved his delivery of the message had been, and how Justification by Faith, by faith only, meant what was said, when it was said by him. Christian thinkers, of more schools than one, and at many periods, have hesitated not a little over that point. The medieval theologian mingled his thoughts of Justification with those of Regeneration, and taught our acceptance accordingly on lines impossible to lay true along those of St Paul. In later days, the meaning of faith has been sometimes beclouded, till it has seemed, through the haze, to be only an indistinct summary-word for Christian consistency, for exemplary conduct, for good works. Now supposing either of these lines of teaching, or anything like them, to be the message of St Paul, "his Gospel," as he preached it; one result may be reasonably inferred—that we should

not have had Rom. vi. 1 worded as it is. Whatever objections were encountered by a Gospel of acceptance expounded on such lines, (and no doubt it would have encountered many, if it called sinful men to holiness,) it would not have encountered this objection, that it seemed to allow men to be unholy. What such a Gospel would seem to do would be to accentuate in all its parts the urgency of obedience in order to acceptance; the vital importance on the one hand of an internal change in our nature (through sacramental operation, according to many); and then on the other hand the practice of Christian virtues, with the hope, in consequence, of acceptance, more or less complete, in heaven. Whether the objector, the enquirer, was dull, or whether he was subtle, it could not have occurred to him to say, "You are preaching a Gospel of licence; I may, if you are right, live as I please, only drawing a little deeper on the fund of gratuitous acceptance as I go on." But just this was the *animus*, and such were very nearly the words, of those who either hated St Paul's message as unorthodox, or wanted an excuse for the sin they loved, and found it in quotations from St Paul. Then St Paul must have meant by faith what faith ought to mean, simple trust. And he must have meant by justification without works, what those words ought to mean, acceptance irrespective of our recommendatory conduct. Such a Gospel was no doubt liable to be mistaken and misrepresented, and in just the way we are now observing. But it was also, and it is so still, the only Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation—to the fully awakened conscience, to the soul that sees itself, and asks for God indeed.

This undesigned witness to the meaning of the Pauline doctrine of Justification by Faith only will appear

still more strongly when we come to the Apostle's answer to his questioners. He meets them not at all by modifications of his assertions. He has not a word to say about additional and corrective conditions precedent to our peace with God. He makes no impossible hint that Justification means the making of us good, or that Faith is a "short title" for Christian practice. No; there is no reason for such assertions either in the nature of words, or in the whole cast of the argument through which he has led us. What does he do? He takes this great truth of our acceptance in Christ our Merit, and puts it unreserved, unrelieved, unspoiled, in contact with other truth, of coordinate, nay, of superior greatness, for it is the truth to which Justification leads us, as way to end. He places our acceptance through Christ Atoning in organic connexion with our life in Christ Risen. He indicates, as a truth evident to the conscience, that as the thought of our share in the Lord's Merit is inseparable from union with the meriting Person, so the thought of this union is inseparable from that of a spiritual harmony, a common life, in which the accepted sinner finds both a direction and a power in his Head. Justification has indeed set him free from the condemning claim of sin, from guilt. He is as if *he* had died the Death of sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction; as if *he* had passed through the *Lama Sabachthani*, and had "poured out *his* soul" for sin. So he is "dead to sin," in the sense in which his Lord and Representative "died to" it; the atoning death has killed sin's claim on him for judgment. As having so died, in Christ, he is "justified from sin." But then, because he thus died "in Christ," he is "in Christ" still, in respect also of resurrection. He is justified, not that he may go away, but that in His Justifier he may

live, with the powers of that holy and eternal life with which the Justifier rose again.

The two truths are concentrated as it were into one, by their equal relation to the same Person, the Lord. The previous argument has made us intensely conscious that Justification, while a definite transaction in law, is not a mere transaction; it lives and glows with the truth of connexion with a Person. That Person is the Bearer for us of all Merit. But He is also, and equally, the Bearer for us of new Life; in which the sharers of His Merit share, for they are in Him. So that, while the Way of Justification can be isolated for study, as it has been in this Epistle, the justified man cannot be isolated from Christ, who is his life. And thus he can never *ultimately* be considered apart from his possession, in Christ, of a new possibility, a new power, a new and glorious call to living holiness.

In the simplest and most practical terms the Apostle sets it before us that our justification is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. We are accepted that we may be possessed, and possessed after the manner not of a mechanical "article," but of an organic limb.* We have "received the reconciliation" that we may now walk, not away from God, as if released from a prison, but with God, as His children in His Son. Because we are justified, we are to be holy, separated from sin, separated to God; not as a mere indication that our faith is real, and that therefore we are legally safe, but because we were justified for this very purpose, that we might be holy. To return to a simile we have

* Not that the imagery of the limb appears here, explicitly. But it does appear below, xii. 5, and in the contemporary passage 1 Cor. vi. 15; and more fully in the Epistles of the First Captivity.

employed already, the grapes upon a vine are not merely a living token that the tree is a vine, and is alive; they are the product for which the vine exists. It is a thing not to be thought of that the sinner should accept justification—and live to himself. It is a moral contradiction of the very deepest kind, and cannot be entertained without betraying an initial error in the man's whole spiritual creed.

And further, there is not only this profound connexion of purpose between acceptance and holiness. There is a connexion of endowment and capacity. Justification has done for the justified a twofold work, both limbs of which are all important for the man who asks, *How can* I walk and please God? First, it has decisively broken the claim of sin upon him as guilt. He stands clear of that exhausting and enfeebling load. The pilgrim's burthen has fallen from his back, at the foot of the Lord's Cross, into the Lord's Grave. He *has* peace with God, not in emotion, but in covenant, through our Lord Jesus Christ. He has an unreserved "introduction" into a Father's loving and welcoming presence, every day and hour, in the Merit of his Head. But then also Justification has been to him as it were the signal of his union with Christ in new life; this we have noted already. Not only therefore does it give him, as indeed it does, an eternal occasion for a gratitude which, as he feels it, "makes duty joy, and labour rest." It gives him *a new power* with which to live the grateful life; a power residing not in Justification itself, but in what it opens up. It is the gate through which he passes to the fountain; it is the wall which ramparts the fountain, the roof which shields him as he drinks. The fountain is his justifying Lord's exalted Life, His risen Life, poured into the man's being by

the Spirit who makes Head and member one. And it is as justified that he has access to the fountain, and drinks as deep as he will of its life, its power, its purity. In the contemporary passage, 1 Cor. vi. 17, St Paul had already written (in a connexion unspeakably practical), "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." It is a sentence which might stand as a heading to the passage we now come to render.

Ver. 1. What shall we say then? Shall we cling to (ἐπιμενοῦμεν, ἐπιμένωμεν) the sin that the grace may multiply, the grace of the acceptance of the guilty? Away with the thought! We, the

Ver. 2. very men who * died to that (τῇ) sin,—when our Representative, in whom we have believed, died for us to it, died to meet and break its claim—how shall we any longer live, have congenial being and action, in it, as in an air we like to breathe? It is a moral impossibility that the man *so* freed from this thing's tyrannic claim to slay him should wish for anything else than severance from it in *all* respects. Or

Ver. 3. do you not know that we all, when baptized † into Jesus Christ, when the sacred water sealed to us our faith-received contact with Him and interest in Him, were baptized into His Death, baptized as coming into union with Him as, above all, the Crucified, the Atoning? Do you forget that your covenant-Head, of whose covenant of peace your baptism was the divine physical token, is nothing to you if not your Saviour *who died*, and who died because of this very sin with

* Οἵτινες: the paraphrase is perhaps a slight exaggeration of the force of the pronoun.

† Ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν: we give a paraphrase, not a translation, to shew the meaning practically.

which your thought now parleys; died because only *so* could He break its legal bond upon you, in order to break its moral bond? We were entombed therefore with Him by means of our (τοῦ) baptism, as it symbolized and sealed the work of faith, into His (τὸν) Death; it certified our interest in that vicarious death, even to its climax in the grave which, as it were, swallowed up the Victim; that just as Christ rose from the dead by means of the glory of the Father, as that death issued for Him in a new and endless life, not by accident, but because the Character of God, the splendour (δόξα) of His love, truth, and power, secured the issue, so we too should begin to walk (περιπατήσωμεν) in newness of life, should step forth in a power altogether new, in our union still with Him. All possible emphasis lies upon those words, "*newness of life.*" They bring out what has been indicated already (v. 17, 18), the truth that the Lord has won us not only remission of a death-penalty, not only even an extension of existence under happier circumstances, and in a more grateful and hopeful spirit—but a new and wonderful life-power. The sinner has fled to the Crucified, that he may not die. He is now not only amnestied but accepted. He is not only accepted but incorporated into his Lord, as one with Him in interest. He is not only incorporated as to interest, but, because His Lord, being Crucified, is also Risen, he is incorporated into Him as Life. The Last Adam, like the First, transmits not only legal but vital effects to His member. In Christ the man has, in a sense as perfectly practical as it is inscrutable, new life, new power, as the Holy Ghost applies to his inmost being the presence and virtues of his Head. "In Him he lives, by Him he moves."

Ver. 4.

To men innumerable the discovery of this ancient

truth, or the fuller apprehension of it, has been indeed like a beginning of new life. They have been long and painfully aware, perhaps, that their strife with evil was a serious failure on the whole, and their deliverance from its power lamentably partial. And they could not always command as they would the emotional energies of gratitude, the warm consciousness of affection. Then it was seen, or seen more fully, that the Scriptures set forth this great mystery, this powerful fact; our union with our Head, by the Spirit, for life, for victory and deliverance, for dominion over sin, for willing service. And the hands are lifted up, and the knees confirmed, as the man uses the now open secret—Christ in him, and he in Christ—for the real walk of life. But let us listen to St Paul again.

Ver. 5. For if we became vitally connected (*σύμφυτοι*), He with us and we with Him, by the likeness of His Death, by the baptismal plunge, symbol and seal of our faith-union with the Buried Sacrifice, why (*ἀλλὰ*), we shall be vitally connected with Him by the likeness also of His Resurrection, by the baptismal emergence, symbol and seal of our faith-union with the Risen Lord, and so with His risen power.* This knowing, that our

Ver. 6. old man, our old state, as out of Christ and under Adam's headship, under guilt and in moral bondage, was crucified with Christ, was as it

* We thus paraphrase a difficult sentence. It seems to us that the *ὁμοίωμα τοῦ θανάτου Αὐτοῦ* must refer to the baptismal rite. If so, our paraphrase as a whole will be justified.—As to the "*plunge*" and "*emergence*," we would only say, without entering further on an agitated question, that it seems to us clear that baptism was at first, *theoretically*, an entire immersion, but that, also primevally, the theory was allowed to be modified in practice; *the pouring* of water in such cases *representing* the ideal immersion. As early as "*the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*," cent. i. (ch. vii.), there are signs of this.

were nailed to His atoning Cross, where He represented us. In other words, He on the Cross, our Head and Sacrifice, so dealt with our fallen state for us, that the body of sin, this our body viewed as sin's stronghold, medium, vehicle, might be cancelled, might be in abeyance, put down, deposed, so as to be no more the fatal door to admit temptation to a powerless soul within.

"*Cancelled*" is a strong word. Let us lay hold upon its strength, and remember that it gives us not a dream, but a fact, to be found true in Christ. Let us not turn its fact into fallacy, by forgetting that, whatever "*cancel*" means, it does not mean that grace lifts us out of the body; that we are no longer to "*keep under the body, and bring it into subjection*," in the name of Jesus. Alas for us, if any promise, any truth, is allowed to "cancel" the call to watch and pray, and to think that in no sense is there still a foe within. But all the rather let us grasp, and use, the glorious positive in its place and time, which is everywhere and every day. Let us recollect, let us confess our faith, that thus it is with us, through Him who loved us. He died for us for this very end, that our "*body of sin*" might be wonderfully "*in abeyance*," as to the power of temptation upon the soul. Yes, as St Paul proceeds, that henceforth we should not do bondservice to sin; that from now onwards, from our acceptance in Him, from our realization of our union with Him, we should say to temptation a "*no*" that carries with it the power of the inward presence of the Risen Lord. Yes, for He has won that power for us in our Justification through His Death. He died for us, and we in Him, as to sin's claim, as to our guilt; and He thus died, as we have seen, on purpose that we might be not only legally accepted, but vitally united to Him. Such is the con-

nexion of the following clause, strangely rendered in the English Version, and often therefore misapplied,

Ver. 7. but whose literal wording is, **For he who died,** he who has died, **has been justified from his** (τῆς) **sin**; stands justified from it, stands free from its guilt. The thought is of the atoning Death, in which the believer is interested as if it were his own. And the implied thought is that, as that death is "fact accomplished," as "our old man" *was* so effectually "crucified with Christ," therefore we may, we must, claim the spiritual freedom and power in the Risen One which the Slain One secured for us when He bore our guilt.

This possession is also a glorious prospect, for it is permanent with the eternity of His Life. It not only

Ver. 8. is, but shall be. **Now if we died with Christ, we believe,** we rest upon His word and work for it, **that we shall also live with Him,*** that we shall share not only now but for all the future the powers of His risen life. For He lives for ever—and we are in Him!

Ver. 9. **Knowing that Christ, risen from the dead, no longer dies,** no death is in His future now; **death over Him has no more dominion,** its *claim* on Him

Ver. 10. is for ever gone. **For as to His dying** (ὃ ἀπέθανε), **it was as to our** (τῇ) **sin He died**; it was to deal with our sin's claim; and He has dealt with it indeed, so that His death is "*once*," ἐφάπαξ,

* More literally, perhaps, "*shall also come to life with Him.*" If we read this aright, it points to the prospect *future at the moment of the atoning Death*, when, ideally, we died. It does not therefore mean, practically, *that we do not live with Him now*, as we certainly do (see just below, ver. 11). But it is as if to say, "we believe that our share in His risen Life *surely follows*, now and always, our share in His atoning Death."

once for ever; but as to His living (ὃ ζῇ), it is as to God He lives; it is in relation to His Father's acceptance, it is as welcomed to His Father's throne for us, as the Slain One Risen. Even so must you too reckon yourselves, with the sure "*calculation*" that His work for you, His life for you, is infinitely valid, to be dead indeed to your (τῇ) sin, dead in His atoning death, dead to the guilt exhausted by that death, but living to your (τῷ) God, in Christ Jesus;* welcomed by your eternal Father, in your union with His Son, and in that union filled with a new and blessed life from your Head, to be spent in the Father's smile, on the Father's service.

Ver. 11.

Let us too, like the Apostle and the Roman Christians, "*reckon*" this wonderful reckoning; counting upon these bright mysteries as upon imperishable facts. All is bound up not with the tides or waves of our emotions, but with the living rock of our union with our Lord. "*In Christ Jesus*":—that great phrase, here first explicitly used in the connexion, includes all else in its embrace. Union with the slain and risen Christ, in faith, by the Spirit—here is our inexhaustible secret, for peace with God, for life to God, now and in the eternal day.

Therefore do not let sin reign † in your mortal body, mortal, because not yet fully emancipated, though your Lord has "cancelled" for you its character as "the body of sin," the seat and vehicle of conquering temptation. Do not let sin reign there, so that you should obey the lusts of it,‡ of the body. Observe the

Ver. 12.

* The words τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν are to be omitted from the text.

† Μὴ βασιλευέτω: possibly the present imperative may imply, "do not *go on letting* it reign."

‡ Omit αὐτῆς from the text.

implied instruction. The body, "*cancelled*" as "the body of sin," still has its "*lusts*," its desires; or rather desires are still occasioned by it to the man, desires which potentially, if not actually, are desires away from God. And the man, justified through the Lord's death and united to the Lord's life, is not therefore to mistake a *laissez-faire* for faith. He is to *use* his divine possessions, with a real energy of will. It is *for him*, in a sense most practical, to see that his wealth is put to use, that his wonderful freedom is realized in act and habit. "*Cancelled*" does not mean annihilated. The body exists, and sin exists, and "*desires*" exist. It is for you, O man in Christ, to say to the enemy, defeated yet present, "Thou shalt not reign; I veto thee in the name of my King."

Ver. 13. **And do not present * your limbs**, your bodies in the detail of their faculties, **as implements** (ὅπλα) **of unrighteousness, to sin**, to sin regarded as the holder and employer of the implements. **But present † yourselves**, your whole being, centre and circle, **to God, as men living after death**, in His Son's risen life, **and your limbs**, hand, foot, and head, with all their faculties, **as implements of righteousness for God.**

"O blissful self-surrender!" The idea of it, sometimes cloudy, sometimes radiant, has floated before the human soul in every age of history. The spiritual fact that the creature, as such, can never find its true centre in itself, but only in the Creator, has expressed itself in many various forms of aspiration and endeavour,

* Παριστάνετε: we may perhaps explain this present imperative also to mean "do not *go on so doing*."

† Παραστήσατε: the aorist certainly implies a critical resolve, a *decision* of surrender.

now nearly touching the glorious truth of the matter, now wandering into cravings after a blank loss of personality, or however an eternal *coma* of absorption into an Infinite practically impersonal; or again, affecting a submission which terminates in itself, an *islàm*, a self-surrender into whose void no blessing falls from the God who receives it. Far different is the "self-presentation" of the Gospel. It is done in the fulness of personal consciousness and choice. It is done with revealed reasons of infinite truth and beauty to warrant its rightness. And it is a placing of the surrendered self into Hands which will both foster its true development as only its Maker can, as He fills it with His presence, and will use it, in the bliss of an eternal serviceableness, for His beloved will.

CHAPTER XV

JUSTIFICATION AND HOLINESS: ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HUMAN LIFE

ROMANS vi. 14—vii. 6

AT the point we have now reached, the Apostle's thought pauses for a moment, to resume.* He has brought us to self-surrender. We have seen the sacred obligations of our divine and wonderful liberty. We have had the miserable question, "*Shall we cling to sin?*" answered by an explanation of the rightness and the bliss of giving over our accepted persons, in the fullest liberty of will, to God, in Christ. Now he pauses, to illustrate and enforce. And two human relations present themselves for the purpose; the one to shew the absoluteness of the surrender, the other its living results. The first is Slavery, the second is Wedlock.

Ver. 14. **For sin shall not have dominion over you**; sin shall not put in its claim upon you, the claim which the Lord has met in your Justification; **for you are**

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* It will be observed that we place *the paragraph* after ver. 13, not, as many editions of the Epistle do, after ver. 14. It seems to us clear that ver. 14 has a closer connexion with the following than with the previous context. It looks back, not precisely to ver. 13, but to the general recent argument, that it may then look definitely forward, over new ground.

not brought* under law, but under grace. The whole previous argument explains this sentence. He refers to our acceptance. He goes back to the justification of the guilty, "without the deeds of law," by the act of free grace; and briefly restates it thus, that he may take up afresh the position that this glorious liberation means not licence but divine order. Sin shall be no more your tyrant-creditor, holding up the broken law in evidence that it has right to lead you off to a pestilential prison, and to death. Your dying Saviour has met your creditor in full for you, and in Him you have entire discharge in that eternal court where the terrible plea once stood against you. Your dealings as debtors are now not with the enemy who cried for your death, but with the Friend who has bought you out of his power.

Ver. 15. What then? are we to sin, because we are not brought under law, but under grace? Shall our life be a life of licence, because we are thus wonderfully free? The question assuredly is one which, like that of ver. 1, and like those suggested in iii. 8, 31, had often been asked of St Paul, by the bitter opponent, or by the false follower. And again it illustrates and defines, by the direction of its error, the line of truth from which it flew off. It helps to do what we remarked above,† to assure us that when St Paul taught "Justification by faith, without deeds of law," he meant what he said, without reserve; he taught that great side of truth wholly, and without a compromise. He called the sinner, "just as he was, and waiting not to rid his soul of one dark blot," to receive at once, and without fee, the acceptance of God

* Ὑπὸ νόμον, ὑπὸ χάριν: the accusative case gives the preposition properly the meaning of *motion underwards*. But this must not be pressed too far.

† P. 157.

for Another's blessed sake. Bitter must have been the moral pain of seeing, from the first, this holy freedom distorted into an unhallowed leave to sin.* But he will not meet it by an impatient compromise, or untimely confusion. It shall be answered by a fresh collocation; the liberty shall be seen in its relation to the Liberator; and behold, the perfect freedom is a perfect service, willing but absolute, a slavery joyfully accepted, with open eyes and open heart, and then lived out as the most real of obligations by a being who has entirely seen that he is not his own.

Ver. 16. **Away with the thought. Do you not know that** the party to whom you present, surrender, **yourselves bondservants, slaves, so as to obey** him,— **bondservants you are,** not the less for the freewill of the surrender, **of the party whom you obey;** no longer merely contractors with him, who may bargain, or retire, but his bondservants out and out; **whether of sin, to death, or of obedience, to righteousness?** (As if their *assent* (ὑπακοή) to Christ, their *Amen* to His terms of peace, acceptance, righteousness, were personified; they were now the bondsmen of this their own act and deed, which had put them, as it were, into Christ's hands for all things.)

Ver. 17. **Now** (δὲ) **thanks be to our** (τῷ) **God, that you were bondmen of sin,** in legal claim, and under moral sway; yes, every one of you was this, whatever forms the bondage took upon its surface; **but you**

* Luther's *Esto peccator, et pecca fortiter*, has been often quoted as if that great saint meant to argue licence from Justification by faith. "God forbid." The words occur in a counsel to Melanchthon, whose anxious conscience doubted whether it were not a sin to communicate in one Kind, even where the true Rite in both Kinds could not be had. It was Luther's glowing paradox, to drive a manifestly morbid and weakening scrupulousness from his friend's mind. See Julius Hare's *Vindication of Luther*, pp. 178, etc.

obeyed from the heart the mould of teaching to which you were handed over.* They had been sin's slaves. Verbally, not really, he "*thanks God*" for that fact of the past. Really, not verbally, he "*thanks God*" for the pastness of the fact, and for the bright contrast to it in the regenerated present. They had now been "*handed over*," by their Lord's transaction about them, to another ownership, and they had accepted the transfer, "*from the heart.*" It was done by Another for them, but they had said their humble, thankful *fiat* as He did it. And what was the new ownership thus accepted? We shall find soon (ver. 22), as we might expect, that it is the mastery of God. But the bold, vivid introductory imagery has already called it (ver. 16) the slavery of "*Obedience.*" Just below (vers. 19, 20) it is the slavery of "*Righteousness,*" that is, if we read the word aright in its whole context, of "the Righteousness of God," His acceptance of the sinner as His own in Christ. And here, in a phrase most unlikely of all, whose personification strikes life into the most abstract aspects of the message of the grace of God, the believer is one who has been transferred to the possession of "*a mould of Teaching.*" The apostolic Doctrine, the mighty Message, the living Creed of life, the Teaching of the acceptance of the guilty for the sake of Him who was their Sacrifice, and is now their Peace and Life—this truth has, as it were, grasped them as its vassals, to form them, to mould them, for its issues. It is indeed their "*tenet.*" It *holds them*; a thought far different from what is too often meant when we say of a doctrine that "we *hold it.*" Justification by their Lord's merit, union with their

* So undoubtedly the Greek must be rendered.

Lord's life; this was a doctrine, reasoned, ordered, verified. But it was a doctrine warm and tenacious with the love of the Father and of the Son. And it had laid hold of them with a mastery which swayed thought, affection, and will; ruling their whole view of self and of God. **Now** (δὲ), **liberated from your** (τῆς) **sin, you were enslaved to the Righteousness of God.*** Here is the point of the argument. It is a point of steel, for all is fact; but the steel is steeped in love, and carries life and joy into the heart it penetrates. They are not for one moment their own. Their acceptance has magnificently emancipated them from their tyrant-enemy. But it has absolutely bound them to their Friend and King. Their glad consent to be accepted has carried with it a consent to belong. And if that consent was at the moment rather implied than explicit, virtual rather than articulately conscious, they have now only to understand their blessed slavery better to give the more joyful thanksgivings to Him who has thus claimed them altogether as His own.

Ver. 18.

The Apostle's aim in this whole passage is to awaken them, with the strong, tender touch of his holy reasoning, to articulate their position to themselves. They have trusted Christ, and are in Him. Then, they have entrusted themselves altogether to Him. Then, they have, in effect, surrendered. They have consented to be His property. They are the bondservants, they are the slaves,† of His Truth, that is, of Him robed and

* See above, p. 173.

† We do not forget that many Christians feel a strong repugnance to the use of this word, steeped as it is in associations of degradation and wrong. For ourselves, we would yield to this feeling so far as habitually to prefer the word of milder sound, "*bondservant*." But surely in this passage the Apostle on purpose so accentuates the

revealed in His Truth, and shining through it on them in the glory at once of His grace and of His claim. Nothing less than such an obligation is the fact for them. Let them feel, let them weigh, and then let them embrace, the chain which after all will only prove their pledge of rest and freedom.

What St Paul thus did for our elder brethren at Rome, let him do for us of this later time. For us, who read this page, all the facts are true in Christ to-day. To-day let us define and affirm their issues to ourselves, and recollect our holy bondage, and realize it, and live it out with joy.

Now he follows up the thought. Conscious of the superficial repulsiveness of the metaphor—quite as repulsive in itself to the Pharisee as to the Englishman—he as it were apologizes for it; not the less carefully, in his noble considerateness, because so many of his first readers were actually slaves. He does not *lightly* go for his picture of our Master's hold of us to the market of Corinth, or of Rome, where men and women were sold and bought to belong as absolutely to their buyers as cattle, or as furniture. Yet he *does* go there, to shake slow perceptions into consciousness, and bring the will face to face with the claim of God. So he proceeds: **I speak humanly**, I use the terms of this utterly *not-divine* bond of man to man, to illustrate man's glorious bond to God, **because of the weakness of your flesh**, because your yet imperfect state enfeebles your spiritual perception, and demands a

Ver. 19.

thought of our bondservice that its fullest and sternest designation is in place. And, if in any degree we gather the thought of other hearts from our own, there are times and connexions in which the fulness of *the joy* of service demands that designation in order to its adequate realization.

harsh paradox to direct and fix it. **For**—here is what he means by "*humanly*"—**just as you surrendered your limbs,*** your functions and faculties in human life, **slaves to your** (τῇ) **impurity and to your** (τῇ) **lawlessness, unto that** (τὴν) **lawlessness**, so that the bad principle did indeed come out in bad practice, **so now**, with as little reserve of liberty, **surrender your limbs slaves to righteousness**, to God's Righteousness, to your justifying God, **unto sanctification**—so that the surrender shall come out in your Master's sovereign separation of His purchased property from sin.

He has appealed to the moral reason of the regenerate soul. Now he speaks straight to the will. You are, with infinite rightfulness, the bondmen of your God. You see your deed of purchase; it is the other side of your warrant of emancipation. Take it, and write your own unworthy names with joy upon it, consenting and assenting to your Owner's perfect rights. And then live out your life, keeping the autograph of your own surrender before your eyes. Live, suffer, conquer, labour, serve, as men who have themselves walked to their Master's door, and presented the ear to the awl which pins it to the doorway, each in his turn saying, "I will not go out free." †

To such an act of the soul the Apostle calls these saints, whether they had done the like before or no. They were to sum up the perpetual fact, then and there, into a definite and critical act (παραστήσατε, aorist) of thankful will. And he calls us to do the same to-day. By the grace of God, it shall be done. With eyes open,

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* Μέλη: what "*the body*" is in such passages as xii. 1 that "*the limbs*" are in detail.

† Exod. xxi. 5, 6; Deut. xv. 16, 17

and fixed upon the face of the Master who claims us, and with hands placed helpless and willing within His hands, we will, we do, present ourselves bondservants to Him; for discipline, for servitude, for all His will.

Ver. 20. **For when you were slaves of your** (τῆς) **sin, you were freemen as to righteousness,** God's Righteousness (τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ). It had nothing to do with you, whether to give you peace or to receive your tribute of love and loyalty in reply. Practically, Christ was not your Atonement, and so not your Master; you stood, in a dismal independence, outside His claims. To you, your lips were your own; your time was your own; your will was your own. You belonged to self; that is to say, you were the slaves of your sin. Will you go back? Will the word "freedom" (he plays with it, as it were, to prove them) make you wish yourselves back where you were before you had endorsed by faith your purchase by the blood of Christ? Nay, for what was that "freedom," seen in its results, its results upon yourselves? What fruit, therefore, (the "*therefore*" of the logic of facts,) **used you to have** then, in those old days, from things over which you are ashamed now? Ashamed indeed; for the end, the issue, as the fruit is the tree's "end," the end of those things is—**death**; perdition of all true life, here and hereafter too.

Ver. 21.

Ver. 22. **But now,** in the blessed actual state of your case, as by faith you have entered into Christ, into His work and into His life, **now liberated from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit,** you possess indeed, at last, the true issues of being for which you were made, **all** contributing **to sanctification,** to that separation to God's will in practice which is the development of your separation to that will in critical fact, when you met your Redeemer in self-renouncing

faith. Yes, this fruit you have indeed; **and as its end,** as that for which it is produced, to which it always and for ever tends, you have **life eternal. For the**
Ver. 23. **pay of sin,** sin's military stipend (ὀψώνια), punctually given to the being which has joined its war against the will of God, **is death; but the free gift of God is life eternal, in Jesus Christ our Lord.**

"Is life worth living?" Yes, infinitely well worth, for the living man who has surrendered to "the Lord that bought him." Outside that ennobling captivity, that invigorating while most genuine bondservice, the life of man is at best complicated and tired with a bewildered quest, and gives results at best abortive, matched with the ideal purposes of such a being. We "present ourselves to God," for His ends, as implements, vassals, willing bondmen; and lo, our own end is attained. Our life has settled, after its long friction, into gear. Our root, after hopeless explorations in the dust, has struck at last the stratum where the immortal water makes all things live, and grow, and put forth fruit for heaven. The heart, once dissipated between itself and the world, is now "united" to the will, to the love, of God; and understands itself, and the world, as never before; and is able to deny self and to serve others in a new and surprising freedom. The man, made willing to be nothing but the tool and bondman of God, "*has his fruit*" at last; bears the true product of his now re-created being, pleasant to the Master's eye, and fostered by His air and sun. And this "*fruit*" issues, as acts issue in habit, in the glad experience of a life really sanctified, really separated in ever deeper inward reality, to a holy will. And the "*end*" of the whole glad possession, is "*life eternal.*"

Those great words here signify, surely, the coming bliss of the sons of the resurrection, when at last in their whole perfected being they will "live" all through, with a joy and energy as inexhaustible as its Fountain, and unencumbered at last and for ever by the conditions of our mortality. To that vast future, vast in its scope yet all concentrated round the fact that "we shall be like HIM, for we shall see HIM as HE is," the Apostle here looks onward. He will say more of it, and more largely, later, in the eighth chapter. But as with other themes so with this he preludes with a few glorious chords the great strain soon to come. He takes the Lord's slave by the hand, amidst his present tasks and burthens, (dear tasks and burthens, because the Master's, but still full of the conditions of earth,) and he points upward—not to a coming *manumission* in glory; the man would be dismayed to foresee that; he wants to "serve for ever";—but to a scene of service in which the last remainders of hindrance to its action will be gone, and a perfected being will for ever, perfectly, be not its own, and so will perfectly live in God. And this, so he says to his fellow-servant, to you and to me, is "*the gift of God*"; a grant as free, as generous, as ever King gave vassal here below. And it is to be enjoyed as such, by a being which, living wholly for Him, will freely and purely exult to live wholly on Him, in the heavenly places.

Yet surely the bearing of the sentences is not wholly upon heaven. Life eternal, so to be developed hereafter that Scripture speaks of it often as if it began hereafter, really begins here, and develops here, and is already "more abundant" (John x. 10) here. It is, as to its secret and also its experience, to know and to enjoy God, to be possessed by Him, and used for all His will. In

this respect it is "*the end*," the issue and the goal, now and perpetually, of the surrender of the soul. The Master meets that attitude with more and yet more of Himself, known, enjoyed, possessed, possessing. And so He gives, evermore gives, out of His sovereign bounty, life eternal to the bondservant who has embraced the fact that he is nothing, and has nothing, outside his Master. Not at the outset of the regenerate life only, and not only when it issues into the heavenly ocean, but all along the course, the life eternal is still "the free gift of God." Let us now, to-day, to-morrow, and always, open the lips of surrendering and obedient faith, and drink it in, abundantly, and yet more abundantly. And let us use it for the Giver.

We are already, here on earth, at its very springs; so the Apostle reminds us. For it is "*in Jesus Christ our Lord*"; and we, believing, are in Him, "saved in His life." It is in Him; nay, it is He. "I am the Life"; "He that hath the Son, hath the life." Abiding in Christ, we live "because He liveth." It is not to be "attained"; it is given, it is our own. In Christ, it is given, in its divine fulness, as to covenant provision, here, now, from the first, to every Christian. In Christ, it is supplied, as to its fulness and fitness for each arising need, as the Christian asks, receives, and uses for his Lord.

So from, or rather in, our holy bondservice the Apostle has brought us to our inexhaustible life, and its resources for willing holiness. But he has more to say in explaining the beloved theme. He turns from slave to wife, from surrender to bridal, from the purchase to the vow, from the results of a holy bondage to the offspring of a heavenly union. Hear him as he proceeds:

Or do you not know, brethren, (for I am talking
Ch. vii. Ver. 1 (λαλῶ) **to those acquainted with law, whether** Mosaic or Gentile,) **that the law has claim on the man, the party** (ἄνθρωπος) **in any given**
Ver. 2. **case, for his whole lifetime? For the woman with a husband** (ἀνὴρ) **is to her living husband bound by law,** stands all along bound (δέδεται) to him. *His life*, under normal conditions, is his adequate claim. Prove him living, and you prove her his. **But if the husband should have died, she stands ipso facto cancelled** * (κατήργηται) **from the husband's law,** the marriage law as he could bring it to bear against her.
Ver. 3. **So, therefore, while the husband lives, she will earn adulteress for her name, if she weds another** (ἑτέρῳ, "*a second*") **husband. But if the husband should have died, she is free from the law in question, so as to be no adulteress, if wedded to another, a second, husband.**
Ver. 4. **Accordingly, my brethren, you too,** as a mystic bride, collectively and individually,† **were done to death as to the Law,** so slain that its capital claim upon you is met *and done*, **by means of the Body of the Christ** (τοῦ Χριστοῦ), by "the doing to death" of His sacred Body for you, on His atoning Cross, to satisfy for you the aggrieved Law; **in order to your wedding Another,** a second Party (ἑτέρῳ), Him who rose from the dead; **that we might bear fruit for God;** "*we*," Paul and his converts, in one happy *fellowship*, which he delights thus to remember and indicate by the way.

The parable is stated and explained with a clearness which leaves us at first the more surprised that in the application the illustration should be reversed. In

* We render the bold phrase literally.

† See 1 Cor. vi. 17.

the illustration, the husband dies, the woman lives, and weds again. In the application, the Law does not die, but we, its unfaithful bride, are "*done to death to it*," and then, strange sequel, are wedded to the Risen Christ. We are taken by Him to be "one spirit" with Him (1 Cor. vi. 17). We are made one in all His interests and wealth, and fruitful of a progeny of holy deeds in this vital union. Shall we call all this a simile confused? Not if we recognize the deliberate and explicit carefulness of the whole passage. St Paul, we may be sure, was quite as quick as we are to see the inverted imagery. But he is dealing with a subject which would be distorted by a mechanical correspondence in the treatment. The Law cannot die, for it is the preceptive will of God. Its claim is, in its own awful *forum domesticum*, like the injured Roman husband, to sentence its own unfaithful wife to death. And so it does; so it has done. But behold, its Maker and Master steps upon the scene. He surrounds the guilty one with Himself, takes her whole burthen on Himself, and meets and exhausts her doom. He dies. He lives again, after death, because of death; and the Law acclaims His resurrection as infinitely just. He rises, clasping in His arms her for whom He died, and who thus died in Him, and now rises in Him. Out of His sovereign love, while the Law attests the sure contract, and rejoices as "the Bridegroom's Friend," He claims her—herself, yet in Him another—for His blessed Bride.

All is love, as if we walked through the lily-gardens of the holy Song, and heard the call of the turtle in the vernal woods, and saw the King and His Beloved rest and rejoice in one another. All is law, as if we were admitted to watch some process of Roman

matrimonial contract, stern and grave, in which every right is scrupulously considered, and every claim elaborately secured, without a smile, without an embrace, before the magisterial chair. The Church, the soul, is married to her Lord, who has died for her, and in whom now she lives. The transaction is infinitely happy. And it is absolutely right. All the old terrifying claims are amply and for ever met. And now the mighty, tender claims which take their place instantly and of course begin to bind the Bride. The Law has "given her away"—not to herself, but to the Risen Lord.

For this, let us remember, is the point and bearing of the passage. It puts before us, with its imagery at once so grave and so benignant, not only the mystic Bridal, but the Bridal as it is concerned with holiness. The Apostle's object is altogether this. From one side and from another he reminds us that *we belong*. He has shewn us our redeemed selves in their blessed bondservice; "free from sin, enslaved to God." He now shews us to ourselves in our divine wedlock; "*married to Another*," "*bound to the law of*" the heavenly Husband; clasped to His heart, but also to His rights, without which the very joy of marriage would be only sin. From either parable the inference is direct, powerful, and, when we have once seen the face of the MASTER and of the HUSBAND, unutterably magnetic on the will. You are set free, into a liberty as supreme and as happy as possible. You are appropriated, into a possession, and into a union, more close and absolute than language can set forth. You are wedded to One who "*has and holds* from this time forward." And the sacred bond is to be prolific of results. A life of willing and loving obedience, in the

power of the risen Bridegroom's life, is to have as it were for its progeny the fair circle of active graces, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control."

Alas, in the time of the old abolished wedlock there was result, there was progeny. But that was the fruit not of the union but of its violation. **For when**
Ver. 5. **we were in the flesh**, in our unregenerate days, when our rebel self,* the antithesis of "the Spirit," ruled and denoted us, (a state, he implies, in which we all were once, whatever our outward differences were,) **the passions**, the strong but reasonless impulses, **of our sins**, which passions were **by means of the Law**, occasioned by the fact of its just but unloved claim, fretting the self-life into action, **worked actively in our limbs**, in our bodily life in its varied faculties and senses, **so as to bear fruit for death**. We wandered, restive, from our bridegroom, the Law, to Sin, our paramour. And behold, a manifold result of evil deeds and habits, born as it were into bondage in the house of Death. **But**
Ver. 6. **now**, now as the wonderful case stands in the grace of God, **we are** (it is the aorist, but our English fairly represents it) **abrogated from the Law**, divorced from our first injured Partner, nay, slain (in our crucified Head) in satisfaction of its righteous claim, **as having died** (ἀποθανόντες†) **with regard to that in which**

* No word, *for practical purposes*, answers better than "*self*" (as popularly used in Christian parlance) to the idea represented by St Paul's use of the word σάρξ in moral connexions.

† So read, not ἀποθανόντος. The textual evidence supports ἀποθανόντες, and the evidence of the context is all for it. He has elaborately *avoided*, in applying his illustration, the thought that *the Law can die*. *We die*, in Christ, in judicial satisfaction of its most righteous claim. It lives with us, it guides us, with the authority of God. But it is now our monitor, not our avenger of blood.

we were held captive, even the Law and its violated bond, so that we do bondservice in the Spirit's newness, and not in the Letter's oldness.

Thus he comes back, through the imagery of wedlock, to that other parable of slavery which has become so precious to his heart. "*So that we do bondservice*," "*so that we live a slave-life*"; ὥστε δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς. It is as if he must break in on the heavenly Marriage itself with that brand and bond, not to disturb the joy of the Bridegroom and the Bride, but to clasp to the Bride's heart the vital fact that she is not her own; that fact so blissful, but so powerful also and so practical that it is *worth anything* to bring it home.

It is to be no dragging and dishonouring bondage, in which the poor toiler looks wistfully out for the sinking sun and the extended shadows. It is to be "*not in the Letter's oldness*"; no longer on the old principle of the dread and unrelieved "*Thou shalt*," cut with a pen of legal iron upon the stones of Sinai; bearing no provision of enabling power, but all possible provision of doom for the disloyal. It is to be "*in the Spirit's newness*"; on the new, wonderful principle, new in its full manifestation and application in Christ, of the Holy Ghost's empowering presence.* In that light and strength the new relations are discovered, accepted, and fulfilled. Joined by the Spirit to the Lord Christ, so as to have full benefit of His justifying merit; filled by the Spirit with the Lord Christ, so as to derive freely and always the blessed virtues of His life; the willing bondservant finds in his

* Such passages as this and its companion, 2 Cor. iii. 4-8, have no reference, however remote, to the "letter and spirit" of Holy Scripture. They contrast Sinai and Pentecost.

absolute obligations an inward liberty ever "*new*," fresh as the dawn, pregnant as the spring. And the worshipping Bride finds in the holy call to "keep her only unto HIM" who has died for her life, nothing but a perpetual surprise of love and gladness, "new every morning," as the Spirit shews her the heart and the riches of her Lord.

Thus closes, in effect, the Apostle's reasoned exposition of the self-surrender of the justified. Happy the man who can respond to it all with the *Amen* of a life which, reposing on the Righteousness of God, answers ever to His Will with the loyal gladness found in "the newness of the Spirit." It is "perfect freedom" to understand, in experience, the bondage and the bridal of the saints.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FUNCTION OF THE LAW IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

ROMANS vii. 7-25

THE Apostle has led us a long way in his great argument; through sin, propitiation, faith, union, surrender, to that wonderful and "excellent mystery," the bridal oneness of Christ and the Church, of Christ and the believer. He has yet to unfold the secrets and glories of the experience of a life lived in the power of that Spirit of whose "*newness*" he has just spoken. But his last parable has brought him straight to a question which has repeatedly been indicated and deferred. He has told us that the Law of God was at first, ideally, our mystic husband, and that we were unfaithful in our wedded life, and that the injured lord sentenced to death his guilty spouse, and that the sentence was carried out—but carried out in Christ. Thus a death-divorce took place between us, the justified, and the Law, regarded as the violated party in the covenant—"Do this and live."

Is this ancient husband then a party whom we are now to suspect, and to defy? Our wedlock with him brought us little joy. Alas, its main experience was that we sinned. At best, if we did right, (in any deep

sense of right,) we did it against the grain; while we did wrong, (in the deep sense of wrong, difference from the will of God,) with a feeling of nature and gravitation. Was not our old lord to blame? Was there not something wrong about the Law? Did not the Law misrepresent God's will? Was it not, after all, *Sin itself in disguise*, though it charged us with the horrible guilt of a course of adultery with Sin?

We cannot doubt that the statement and the treatment of this question here are in effect a record of personal experience. The paragraph which it originates, this long last passage of chapter vii., bears every trace of such experience. Hitherto, in the main, he has dealt with "*you*" and "*us*"; now he speaks only as "*I*," only of "*me*," and of "*mine*." And the whole dialect of the passage, so to say, falls in with this use of pronouns. We overhear the colloquies, the altercations, of will with conscience, of will with will, almost of self with self, carried on in a region which only self-consciousness can penetrate, and which only the subject of it all can thus describe. Yes, the person Paul is here, analysing and reporting upon himself; drawing the veil from his own inmost life, with a hand firm because surrendered to the will of God, who bids him, for the Church's sake, expose himself to view. Nothing in literature, no *Confessions* of an Augustine, no *Grace Abounding* of a Bunyan, is more intensely individual. Yet on the other hand nothing is more universal in its searching application. For the man who thus writes is "the chosen vessel" of the Lord who has perfectly adjusted not his words only but his being, his experience, his conflicts and deliverances, to be manifestations of universal spiritual facts.

We need hardly say that this profound paragraph

has been discussed and interpreted most variously. It has been held by some to be only St Paul's intense way of presenting that great phenomenon, wide as fallen humanity—human will colliding with human conscience, so that "no man does all he knows." Passages from every quarter of literature, of all ages, of all races, have been heaped around it, to prove, (what is indeed so profoundly significant a fact, largely confirmatory of the Christian doctrine of Original Sin,*) that universal man is haunted by undone duties; and this passage is placed as it were in the midst, as the fullest possible confession of that fact, in the name of humanity, by an ideal individual. But surely it needs only an attentive reading of the passage, as a part of the Epistle to the Romans, as a part of the teaching of St Paul, to feel the extreme inadequacy of such an account. On the one hand the long groaning confession is no artificial embodiment of a universal fact; it is the cry of a human soul, if ever there was a personal cry. On the other hand the passage betrays a kind of conflict far deeper and more mysterious than merely that of "*I ought*" with "*I will not.*" It is a conflict of "*I will*" with "*I will not*"; of "*I hate*" with "*I do.*" And in the later stages of the confession we find the subject of the conflict avowing a wonderful sympathy with the Law of God; recording not merely an avowal that right is right, but a consciousness that God's precept is delectable. All this leads us to a spiritual region unknown to Euripides, and Horace, and even Epictetus.

Again it has been held that the passage records the experiences of a half-regenerate soul; struggling on

* See J. B. Mozley's *Lectures, etc.*, lx, x.

its way from darkness to light, stumbling across a border-zone between the power of Satan and the kingdom of God; deeply convinced of sin, but battling with it in the old impossible way after all, meeting self with self, or, otherwise, the devil with the man. But here again the passage seems to refuse the exposition, as we read *all* its elements. It is no experience of a half-renewed life to "take delight with the law of God after the inner man." It is utterly unlawful for a half-regenerate soul to describe itself as so beset by sin that "it is *not I*, but sin that dwelleth in me." No more dangerous form of thought about itself could be adopted by a soul not fully acquainted with God.

Again, and quite on the other hand, it has been held that our passage lays it down that a stern but on the whole disappointing conflict with internal evil is the lot of the true Christian, in his fullest life, now, always, and to the end; that the regenerate and believing man is, if indeed awake to spiritual realities, to *feel* at every step, "O wretched man that I am"; "What I hate, that I do"; and to expect deliverance from such a consciousness only when he attains his final heavenly rest with Christ. Here again extreme difficulties attend the exposition; not from within the passage, but from around it. It is literally encircled with truths of liberty, in a servitude which is perfect freedom; with truths of power and joy, in a life which is by the Holy Ghost. It is quite incongruous with such surroundings that it should be thought to describe a spiritual experience dominant and characteristic in the Christian life.

"What shall we say then?" Is there yet another line of exegesis which will better satisfy the facts of both the passage and its context? We think there is one, which at once is distinctive in itself, and combines

elements of truth indicated by the others which we have outlined. For those others *have* each an element of truth, if we read aright. The passage *has* a reference to the universal conflict of conscience and will. It does say some things quite appropriate to the man who is awake to his bondage but has not yet found his Redeemer. And there is, we dare to say, a sense in which it may be held that the picture is true for the whole course of Christian life here on earth; for there is never an hour of that life when the man who "says he has no sin" does not "deceive himself" (1 Joh. i. 8). And if that sin be but simple defect, a falling "short of the glory of God"; nay, if it be only that mysterious tendency which, felt or not, hourly needs a divine counteraction; still, the man "has sin," and must long for a final emancipation, with a longing which carries in it at least *a latent* "groan."

So we begin by recognizing that Paul, the personal Paul, speaking here to all of us, as in some solemn "testimony" hour, takes us first to his earliest deep convictions of right and wrong, when, apparently after a previous complacency with himself, he woke to see—but not to welcome—the absoluteness of God's will. He glided along a smooth stream of moral and mental culture and reputation till he struck the rock of "Thou shalt not covet," "Thou shalt not desire," "Thou must not have self-will." Then, as from a grave, which was however only an ambush, "*sin*" sprang up; a conscious force of opposition to the claim of God's will as against the will of Paul; and his dream of religious satisfaction died. Till we close ver. 11, certainly, we are in the midst of the unregenerate state. The tenses are past; the narrative is explicit. He made a discovery of law which was as death after life to his then religious experience. He has nothing to say of counter-facts

in his soul. It was conviction, with only rebellion as its issue.

Then we find ourselves, we hardly know how, in a range of confessions of a different order. There is a continuity. The Law is there, and sin is there, and a profound moral conflict. But there are now counter-facts. The man, the *Ego*, now "*wills not*," nay, "*hates*," what he practises. He wills what God prescribes, though he does it not. His sinful deeds are, in a certain sense, in this respect, not his own. He actually "*delights, rejoices, with the Law of God.*" Yet there is a sense in which he is "*sold*," "*enslaved*," "*captured*," in the wrong direction.

Here, as we have admitted, there is much which is appropriate to the not yet regenerate state, where however the man is awakening morally, to good purpose, under the hand of God. But the passage as a whole refuses to be satisfied thus, as we have seen. He who can truly speak thus of an inmost sympathy, a sympathy of delight, with the most holy Law of God, is no half-Christian; certainly not in St Paul's view of things.

But now observe one great negative phenomenon of the passage. We read words about this regenerate sinner's moral being and faculties; about his "*inner man*," his "*mind*," "*the law of his mind*"; about "*himself*," as distinguished from the "*sin*" which haunts him. But we read not one clear word about that eternal Spirit, whose glorious presence we have seen (vii. 6), characterizing the Gospel, and of whom we are soon to hear in such magnificent amplitude. Once only is He even distantly indicated; "the *Law* is *spiritual*" (ver. 14). But that is no comfort, no deliverance. The Spirit is indeed in the Law; but He must be also

in the man, if there is to be effectual response, and harmony, and joy. No, we look in vain through the passage for one hint that the man, that Paul, is contemplated in it as filled by faith with the Holy Ghost for his war with indwelling sin working through his embodied conditions.

But he was regenerate, you say. And if so, he was an instance of the Spirit's work, a receiver of the Spirit's presence. It is so; not without the Spirit, working in him, could he "delight in the law of God," and "with his true self serve the law of God." But does this necessarily mean that he, as a conscious agent, was fully using his eternal Guest as his power and victory?

We are not merely discussing a literary passage. We are pondering an oracle of God about man. So we turn full upon the reader—and upon ourselves—and ask the question, whether the heart cannot help to expound this hard paragraph. Christian man, by grace, —that is to say, by the Holy Spirit of God,—you have believed, and live. You are a limb of Christ, who is your life. But you are a sinner still; always, actually, in defect, and in tendency; always, potentially, in ways terribly positive. For whatever the presence of the Spirit in you has done, it has not so altered you that, if He should go, you would not *instantly* "revert to the type" of unholiness. Now, how do you meet temptation from without? How do you deal with the dread fact of guilty imbecility within? Do you, if I may put it so, use regenerate faculty in unregenerate fashion, meeting the enemy *practically* alone, with only high resolves, and moral scorn of wrong, and assiduous processes of discipline on body or mind? God forbid we should call these things evil. They are good. But they

are the accidents, not the essence, of the secret; the wall, not the well, of power and triumph. It is the Lord Himself dwelling in you who is your victory; and that victory is to be realized by a conscious and decisive appeal to Him. "Through Him you shall do valiantly; for He it is that shall tread down your enemies" (Psal. lx. 12). And is not this verified in your experience? When, in your regenerate state, you use the true regenerate way, is there not a better record to be given? When, realizing that the true principle is indeed a Person, you less resolve, less struggle, and more appeal and confide—is not sin's "reign" broken, and is not your foot, even yours, because you are in conscious union with the Conqueror, placed effectually on "all the power of the enemy"?

We are aware of the objection ready to be made, and by devout and reverent men. It will be said that the Indwelling Spirit works always through the being in whom He dwells; and that so we are not to think of Him as a separable Ally, but just to *act ourselves*, leaving it to Him to act through us. Well, we are willing to state the matter almost exactly in those last words, as theory. But the subject is too deep—and too practical—for neat logical consistency. He does indeed work in us, and through us. But then—it is He. And to the hard pressed soul there is an unspeakable reality and power in thinking of Him as a separable, let us say simply a personal, Ally, who is also Commander, Lord, Life-Giver; and in calling Him definitely in.

So we read this passage again, and note this absolute and eloquent silence in it about the Holy Ghost. And we dare, in that view, to interpret it as St Paul's confession, not of a long past experience, not of an

imagined experience, but of his own normal experience always—when he acts out of character as a regenerate man. He fails, he "reverts," when, being a sinner by nature still, and in the body still, he meets the Law, and meets temptation, in any strength short of the definitely sought power of the Holy Ghost, making Christ all to him for peace and victory. And he implies, surely, that this failure is not a bare hypothesis, but that he knows what it is. It is not that God is not sufficient. He is so, always, now, for ever. But the man does not always adequately use God; as he ought to do, as he might do, as he will ever rise up afresh to do. And when he does not, the resultant failure—though it be but a thought of vanity, a flush of unexpressed anger, a microscopic flaw in the practice of truthfulness, an unhallowed imagination darting in a moment through the soul—is to him sorrow, burthen, shame. It tells him that "the flesh" is present still, present at least in its elements, though God can keep them out of combination. It tells him that, though immensely blest, and knowing now exactly where to seek, and to find, a constant practical deliverance (oh joy unspeakable!), he is still "in the body," and that its conditions are still of "death." And so he looks with great desire for its redemption. The present of grace is good, beyond all his hopes of old. But the future of glory is "far better."

Thus the man at once "serves the Law of God," as its willing bondman (δουλεύω, ver. 25), in the life of grace, and submits himself, with reverence and shame, to its convictions, when, if but for an hour, or a moment, he "reverts" to the life of the flesh.

Let us take the passage up now for a nearly continuous translation.

What shall we say then, in face of the thought of our
Ver. 7. death-divorce, in Christ, from the Law's condemning power. Is the Law sin? Are they only two phases of one evil? Away with the thought! But—here is the connexion of the two—I should not have known, recognized, understood, sin but by means of law. For coveting, for example, I should not have known, should not have recognized as sin, if the Law had not been saying, "Thou shalt not covet."* But sin,
Ver. 8. making a fulcrum of the commandment,† produced, effected, in me all coveting, every various
Ver. 9. application of the principle. For, law apart, sin is dead—in the sense of lack of conscious action. It needs *a holy Will*, more or less revealed, to occasion its collision. Given no holy will, known or surmised, and it is "dead" *as rebellion*, though not *as pollution*. But I, the person in whom it lay buried, was all alive (ἔζων), conscious and content, law apart, once on a time (strange ancient memory in that biography!). But when the commandment came to my conscience and my will, sin rose to life again, ("*again*"; so it was no new creation after all) and I—died; I found myself legally doomed to death, morally without life-power, and bereft of the self-satisfaction that seemed my vital breath.
Ver. 10. And the commandment that was life-wards, prescribing nothing but perfect right, the straight line to life eternal, proved (εὑρέθη) for me deathwards.
Ver. 11. For sin, making a fulcrum of the commandment, deceived me, into thinking fatally wrong of God

* Exod. xx. 17.—Observe here that great fact of Christian doctrine; that desire, bias, gravitation away from God's will, is sin, whether carried into act *or not*. Is not St Paul here recalling some quite special spiritual incident?

† Ἀφορμὴν λαβοῦσα διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς.

and of myself, and through it killed me, discovered me to myself as legally and morally a dead man. So that
Ver. 12. the Law, indeed (*μὲν*), is holy, and the commandment, the special precept which was my actual death-blow, holy, and just, and good. (He says, "the Law, *indeed*" (*μὲν*), with the implied antithesis that "sin, *on the other hand*," is the opposite; the whole fault of his misery beneath the Law lies with sin.)
Ver. 13. The good thing then, this good Law, has it to me * become death? Away with the thought! Nay, but sin did so become that it might come out as sin, working out death for me by means of the good Law—that sin might prove overwhelmingly sinful, through the commandment, which at once called it up, and, by awful contrast, exposed its nature. Observe, he does not say merely that sin thus "*appeared*" unutterably evil. More boldly, in this sentence of mighty paradoxes, he says that it "*became*" such. As it were, it developed its *character* into its fullest *action*, when it thus used the eternal Will to set creature against Creator. Yet even this was overruled; all happened thus "in order," so that the very virulence of the plague might effectually demand the glorious Remedy.
Ver. 14. For we know, we men with our conscience, we Christians with our Lord's light, that the Law, this Law which sin so foully abused, is spiritual, the expression of the eternal Holiness, framed by the sure guidance of the Holy Spirit; but then I, I Paul, taken as a sinner, viewed apart from Christ, am fleshly, a child of self, sold to be under sin; yes, not only when, in Adam, my nature sold itself at first, but still and always, just so far as I am considered apart from Christ,

* Ἐμοὶ is slightly emphatic; as if to say, "*at least in my case.*"

and just so far as, in practice, I live apart from Christ, "reverting," if but for a minute, to my self-life. For
Ver. 15. the work I work out, I do not know, I do not recognize; I am lost amidst its distorted conditions; for it is not what I will that I practise (πράσσω),
Ver. 16. but it is what I hate that I do (ποιῶ). But if what I do is what I do not will, I assent to the Law that it, the Law, is good; I shew my moral sympathy with the precept by the endorsement given it by my will, in the sense of my earnest moral preference.* But now,
Ver. 17. in this state of facts, it is no longer I who work out the work, but the indweller in me—Sin.

He implies by "*no longer*" that once it was otherwise; once *the central* choice was for self, now, in the regenerate life, even in its conflicts, yea, even in its failures, it is for God A mysterious "other self" is latent still, and asserts itself in awful reality when the true man, the man as regenerate, ceases to watch and to pray. And in this sense he dares to say "*it is no more I.*" It is a sense the very opposite to the dream of self-excuse; for though the *Ego* as regenerate does not do the deed, it has, by its sleep, or by its confidence, betrayed the soul to the true doer. And thus he passes naturally into the following confessions, in which we read at once the consciousness of a state which ought not to be, though it is, and also the conviction that it is a state *out of character* with himself, with his personality as redeemed and new-created. Into such a confession there creeps no lying thought that he "is delivered to do these abominations" (Jer. vii. 10); that it is fate; that he cannot help it. Nor is the

* For this meaning of θέλειν see the closely parallel passage, the almost sketch or embryo of this paragraph, Gal. v. 17.

miserable dream present here that evil is but a phase of good, and that these conflicts are only discordant melodies struggling to a cadence where they will accord. It is a groan of shame and pain, from a man who could not be thus tortured if he were not born again. Yet it is also an avowal,—as if to assure himself that deliverance is intended, and is at hand,—that the treacherous tyrant he has let into the place of power *is an alien* to him as he is a man regenerate. Not for excuse, but to clear his thought, and direct his hope, he says this to himself, and to us, in his dark hour.

Ver. 18. For I know that there dwells not in me, that is, in my flesh, good; in my personal life, so long, and so far, as it "reverts" to self as its working centre, all is evil, for nothing is as God would have it be. And that "*flesh*," that self-life, is ever there, latent if not patent; present in such a sense that it is ready for instant reappearance, from within, if any moral power less than that of the Lord Himself is in command. For the willing lies at my hand; but the working out what is right, does not.* "*The willing*" (*τὸ θέλειν*), as throughout this passage, means not the ultimate *fiat* of the man's soul, deciding his action, but his earnest moral approbation, moral sympathy, *the convictions* of the enlightened being.

Ver. 19. For not what I will, even good, do I; but what I do not will, even evil, that I practise.† Now if what I do is

Ver. 20. what I do not will, no longer, as once, do I work it out, but the indweller in me, Sin.

Again his purpose is not excuse, but deliverance

* Read not *οὐχ εὑρίσκω*, but simply *οὐ*.

† Again *ποιῶ* and *πράσσω*, as in ver. 16.

No deadly antinomianism is here, such as has withered innumerable lives, where the thought has been admitted that sin may be in the man, and yet the man may not sin. His thought is, as all along, that it is his own shame that thus it is; yet that the evil is, ultimately, a thing alien to his true character, and that therefore he is right to call the lawful King and Victor in upon it.

And now comes up again the solemn problem of the Law. That stern, sacred, monitor is looking on all the while, and saying all the while the things which first woke sin from its living grave in the old complacent experience, and then, in the regenerate state, provoked sin to its utmost treachery, and most fierce invasions. And the man hears the voice, and in his new-created character he loves it. But he has "reverted," ever so little, to his old attitude, to the self-life, and so there is *also* rebellion in him when that voice says "Thou shalt."

Ver. 21. **So I find the Law**—he would have said, "I find it my monitor, honoured, aye and loved, but not my helper"; but he breaks the sentence up in the stress of this intense confession; **so I find the Law**—**for me**, me with a will to do the right,—**that for me the evil lies at hand.** Ver. 22. **For I have glad sympathy** with (*συνήδομαι*) **the Law of God**; what He prescribes I endorse with delight as good, **as regards the inner man**, that is, my world of conscious insight and affection * in the new life; Ver. 23. **but I see** (as if I were a watcher from without) **a rival** (*ἕτερον*) law, another and contradictory precept, "serve *thyself*," **in my limbs**, in my world of sense and active faculty, **at war with the law of my mind**, the Law of God, adopted

* In itself, the phrase *ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος* is neutral. By usage it attaches itself to ideas of regeneration. See 2 Cor. iv. 16, Eph. iii. 16.

by my now enlightened thi ˙ng-power as its sacred code, and seeking to make me captive in that war* to the law of sin, the law which is in my limbs.

Ver. 24. Unhappy man am I. Who will rescue me out of the body of this death,† out of a life conditioned by this mortal body, which in the Fall became sin's especial vehicle, directly or indirectly, and which is not yet (vii. 23) actually "redeemed"? Thanks be

Ver. 25. to God,‡ who giveth that deliverance, in covenant and in measure now, fully and in eternal actuality hereafter, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So then, to sum the whole phenomenon of the conflict up, leaving aside for the moment this glorious hope of the issue, I, myself, with the mind indeed do bondservice to the law of God, but with the flesh, with the life of self, wherever and whenever I "revert" that way, I do bondservice to the law of sin.

Do we close the passage with a sigh, and almost with a groan? Do we sigh over the intricacy of the thought, the depth and subtlety of the reasoning, the almost fatigue of fixing and of grasping the facts below the terms "*will*," and "*mind*," and "*inner man*," and "*flesh*," and "*I*"? Do we groan over the consciousness that no analysis of our spiritual failures can console us for the fact of them, and that the Apostle seems in his last sentences to relegate our consolations to the

* Αἰχμαλωτίζοντα: "Making me prisoner of *war*." Observe the present tense, which indicates not necessarily the full success of the strategy, but its aim.

† The Greek equally allows the rendering "*out of this body of death*."

‡ Read χάρις τῷ Θεῷ.

future, while it is in the present that we fail, and in the present that we long with all our souls to do, as well as to approve, the will of God?

Let us be patient, and also let us think again. Let us find a solemn and sanctifying peace in the patience which meekly accepts the mystery that we must needs "wait yet for the redemption of our body"; that the conditions of "this corruptible" must yet for a season give ambushes and vantages to temptation, which will be all annihilated hereafter. But let us also think again. If we went at all aright in our remarks previous to this passage, there are glorious possibilities for the present hour "readable between the lines" of St Paul's unutterably deep confession. We have seen in conflict the Christian man, regenerate, yet taken, in a practical sense, apart from his Regenerator. We have seen him really fight, though he really fails. We have seen him unwittingly, but guiltily, betray his position to the foe, by occupying it as it were alone. We have seen also, nevertheless, that he is not his foe's ally but his antagonist. Listen; he is calling for his KING.

That cry will not be in vain. The King will take a double line of action in response. While his soldier-bondservant is yet in the body, "the body of this death," He will throw HIMSELF into the narrow hold, and wonderfully turn the tide within it, and around it. And hereafter, He will demolish it. Rather, He will transfigure it, into the counterpart—even as it were into the part—of His own Body of glory; and the man shall rest, and serve, and reign for ever, with a being homogeneous all through in its likeness to the Lord.

CHAPTER XVII

THE JUSTIFIED: THEIR LIFE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

ROMANS viii. 1-11

THE sequence of the eighth chapter of the Epistle on the seventh is a study always interesting and fruitful. No one can read the two chapters over without feeling the strong connexion between them, a connexion at once of contrast and of complement. Great indeed is the contrast between the paragraph vii. 7-25 and the eighth chapter. The stern analysis of the one, unrelieved save by the fragment of thanksgiving at its close, (and even this is followed at once by a re-statement of the mysterious dualism,) is to the revelations and triumphs of the other as an almost starless night, stifling and electric, to the splendour of a midsummer morning with a yet more glorious morrow for its future. And there is complement as well as contrast. The day is related to the night, which has prepared us for it, as hunger prepares for food. Precisely what was absent from the former passage is supplied richly in the latter. There the Name of the Holy Spirit, "the Lord, the Life-Giver," was unheard. Here the fact and power of the Holy Spirit are present everywhere, so present that there is no other portion of the whole Scripture, unless we except the Redeemer's own Paschal Discourse, which presents us with so great a wealth of revelation on this

all-precious theme. And here we find the secret that is to "stint the strife" which we have just witnessed, and which in our own souls we know so well. Here is the way "*how* to walk and to please God" (1 Thess iv. 1), in our justified life. Here is the way how, not to be as it were the victims of "the body," and the slaves of "the flesh," but to "*do to death the body's practices*" in a continuous exercise of inward power, and to "*walk after the Spirit.*" Here is the resource on which we may be for ever joyfully paying "*the debt*" of such a walk; giving our redeeming Lord His due, the value of His purchase, even our willing, loving surrender, in the all-sufficient strength of "the Holy Ghost given unto us."

Noteworthy indeed is the manner of the introduction of this glorious truth. It appears not without preparation and intimation; we have heard already of the Holy Ghost in the Christian's life, v. 5, vii. 6. The heavenly water has been seen and heard in its flow; as in a limestone country the traveller may see and hear, through fissures in the fields, the buried but living floods. But here the truth of the Spirit, like those floods, finding at last their exit at some rough cliff's base, pours itself into the light, and animates all the scene. In such an order and manner of treatment there is a spiritual and also a practical lesson. We are surely reminded, as to the experiences of the Christian life, that in a certain sense we possess the Holy Ghost, yea, in His fulness, from the first hour of our possession of Christ. We are reminded also that it is at least possible on the other hand that we may need so to realize and to use our covenant possession, after sad experiments in other directions, that life shall be thenceforth a new experience of liberty and holy joy. We are reminded meanwhile

that such a "new departure," when it occurs, is new rather from our side than from the Lord's. The water was running all the while below the rocks. Insight and faith, given by His grace, have not called it from above, but as it were from within, liberating what was there.

The practical lesson of this is important for the Christian teacher and pastor. On the one hand, let him make very much in his instructions, public and private, of the revelation of the Spirit. Let him leave no room, so far as he can do it, for doubt or oblivion in his friends' minds about the absolute necessity of the fulness of the presence and power of the Holy One, if life is to be indeed Christian. Let him describe as boldly and fully as the Word describes it what life may be, must be, where that sacred fulness dwells; how assured, how happy within, how serviceable around, how pure, free, and strong, how heavenly, how practical, how humble. Let him urge any who have yet to learn it to learn all this in their own experience, claiming on their knees the mighty gift of God. On the other hand, let him be careful not to overdraw his theory, and to prescribe too rigidly the methods of experience. Not all believers fail in the first hours of their faith to realize, and to use, the fulness of what the Covenant gives them. And where that realization comes later than our first sight of Christ, as with so many of us it does come, not always is the experience and action the same. To one it is a crisis of memorable consciousness, a private Pentecost. Another wakes up as from sleep to find the unsuspected treasure at his hand—hid from him till then by nothing thicker than shadows. And another is aware that somehow, he knows not how, he has come to use the Presence and Power as a while ago he did not; he has passed a frontier—but he knows not when.

In all these cases, meanwhile, the man had, in one great respect, possessed the great gift all along. In covenant, in Christ, it was his. As he stepped by penitent faith into the Lord, he trod on ground which, wonderful to say, was all his own. And beneath it ran, that moment, the River of the water of life. Only, he had to discover, to draw, and to apply.

Again, the relation we have just indicated between our possession of Christ and our possession of the Holy Ghost is a matter of the utmost moment, spiritual and practical, presented prominently in this passage. All along, as we read the passage, we find linked inextricably together the truths of the Spirit and of the Son. "*The law of the Spirit of life*" is bound up with "*Christ Jesus.*" The Son of God was sent, to take our flesh, to die as our Sin-Offering, that we might "*walk according to the Spirit.*" "*The Spirit of God*" is "*the Spirit of Christ.*" The presence of the Spirit of Christ is such that, where He dwells, "*Christ is in you.*" Here we read at once a caution, and a truth of the richest positive blessing. We are warned to remember that there is no *separable* "Gospel of the Spirit." Not for a moment are we to advance, as it were, from the Lord Jesus Christ to a higher or deeper region, ruled by the Holy Ghost. All the reasons, methods, and issues of the work of the Holy Ghost are eternally and organically connected with the Son of God. We have Him at all because Christ died. We have life because He has joined us to Christ living. Our experimental proof of His fulness is that Christ to us is all. And we are to be on the guard against any exposition of His work and glory which shall for one moment leave out those facts. But not only are we to be on our guard; we are to rejoice in the thought that the mighty, the endless, work of the

Spirit *is* all done always upon that sacred Field, Christ Jesus. And every day we are to draw upon the indwelling Giver of Life to do for us His own, His characteristic, work; to shew us "our King in His beauty," and to "fill our springs of thought and will with Him."

To return to the connexion of the two great chapters. We have seen how close and pregnant it is; the contrast and the complement. But it is also true, surely, that the eighth chapter is not merely and only the counterpart to the seventh. Rather the eighth, though the seventh applies to it a special motive, is also a review of the whole previous argument of the Epistle, or rather the crown on the whole previous structure. It begins with a deep re-assertion of our Justification; a point unnoticed in vii. 7-25. It does this using an inferential particle, "*therefore*," ἄρα—to which, surely, nothing in the just preceding verses is related. And then it unfolds not only the present acceptance and present liberty of the saints, but also their amazing future of glory, already indicated, especially in ch. v. 2. And its closing strains are full of the great first wonder, our Acceptance. "*Them He justified*"; "*It is God that justifieth.*" So we forbear to take ch. viii. as simply the successor and counterpart of ch. vii. It is this, in some great respects. But it is more; it is the meeting point of all the great truths of grace which we have studied, their meeting point in the sea of holiness and glory.*

As we approach the first paragraph of the chapter, we ask ourselves what is its message on the whole, its

* "In this surpassing chapter the several streams of the preceding arguments meet and flow in one 'river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,' until it seems to lose itself in the ocean of a blissful eternity."—David Brown, D.D., "*The Epistle to the Romans*," in "*Handbooks for Bible Classes.*"

true *envoi*. It is, our possession of the Holy Spirit of God, for purposes of holy loyalty and holy liberty. The foundation of that fact is once more indicated, in the brief assertion of our full Justification in Christ, and of His propitiatory Sacrifice (ver. 3). Then from those words, "*in Christ*," he opens this ample revelation of our possession, in our union with Christ, of the Spirit who, having joined us to Him, now liberates us in Him, not from condemnation only but from sin's dominion. If we are indeed in Christ, the Spirit is in us, dwelling in us, and we are in the Spirit. And so, possessed and filled by the blessed Power, we indeed have power to walk and to obey. Nothing is mechanical, automatic; we are fully persons still; He who annexes and possesses our personality does not for a moment violate it. But then, He *does* possess it; and the Christian, so possessing and so possessed, is not only bound but enabled, in humble but practical reality, in a liberty otherwise unknown, to "*fulfil the just demand of the Law*," "*to please God*," in a life lived not to self but to Him.

Thus, as we shall see in detail as we proceed, the Apostle, while he still firmly keeps his hand, so to speak, on Justification, is occupied fully now with its issue, Holiness. And this issue he explains as not merely a matter of grateful feeling, the outcome of the loyalty supposed to be natural to the pardoned. He gives it as a matter of divine power, secured to them under the Covenant of their acceptance.

Shall we not enter on our expository study full of holy expectation, and with unspeakable desires awake, to receive all things which in that Covenant are ours? Shall we not remember, over every sentence, that in it Christ speaks by Paul, and speaks to us? For us

also, as for our spiritual ancestors, all this is true. It shall be true in us also, as it was in them.

We shall be humbled as well as gladdened; and thus our gladness will be sounder. We shall find that whatever be our "*walk according to the Spirit*," and our veritable dominion over sin, we shall still have "*the practices of the body*" with which to deal—of the body which still is "*dead because of sin*," "*mortal*," not yet "*redeemed*." We shall be practically reminded, even by the most joyous exhortations, that possession and personal condition are one thing in covenant, and another in realization; that we must watch, pray, examine self, and deny it, if we would "be" what we "are." Yet all this is but the salutary accessory to the blessed main burthen of every line. We are accepted in the Lord. In the Lord we have the Eternal Spirit for our inward Possessor. Let us arise, and "walk humbly," but also in gladness, "with our God."

St Paul speaks again, perhaps after a silence, and Tertius writes down for the first time the now immortal and beloved words. So no adverse sentence is there now, in view of this great fact of our redemption, for those in Christ Jesus.* "*In Christ Jesus*"—mysterious union, blessed fact, wrought by the Spirit who linked us sinners to the Lord.† For the law of the Spirit of the

Ver. 1.

Ver. 2.

* There can be no reasonable doubt that the words "*who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*," should be omitted. They are probably a *gloss* from ver. 4; inserted (perhaps first as a side-note) by scribes who failed to appreciate the profound simplicity of the Apostle's dictum.

† We thus indicate the thought given by the otherwise difficult "*For*" of ver. 2. That "*for*" cannot mean to imply that there is no condemnation *because the Spirit has enabled us to be holy*; this would stultify the whole argument of chapters iii.-v. What, in that context,

life which is in Christ Jesus* freed me, the man of the conflict just described, from the law of sin and of death. The "law," the preceptive will, which legislates the covenant of blessing for all who are in Christ, has set him free. By a strange, pregnant paradox, so we take it, the Gospel—the message which carries with it acceptance, and also holiness, by faith—is here called a "law." For while it is free grace to us it is also immovable ordinance with God. The amnesty is His edict. It is by heavenly *statute* that sinners, believing, possess the Holy Spirit in possessing Christ. And here, with a sublime abruptness and directness, that great gift of the Covenant, the Spirit, for which the Covenant gift of Justification was given, is put forward as the Covenant's characteristic and crown. It is for the moment as if this were all—that "*in Christ Jesus*" we, I, are under the *fiat* which assures to us the fulness of the Spirit. And this "law," unlike the stern "letter" of Sinai, has actually "*freed me.*" It has endowed me not only with place but with power, in which to live emancipated from a rival law, the law of sin and of death. And what is that rival "law"? We dare to say, it is the preceptive will of Sinai; "Do this, and thou shalt live." This is a hard saying; for in itself that very Law has been recently vindicated as holy, and just, and good, and spiritual. And only a few lines

it must imply is the complex fact (1) that *we are in Christ*—where there is no condemnation, and (2) that we are there *by the Holy Spirit*, who brought us to saving faith. Now we are to learn (3) what that Spirit has done *also* for us in giving us union with Christ.

* Τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. In the Greek of the N. T. it is possible so to interpret. Classical Greek would require τῆς ζωῆς τῆς ἐν X. Ἰ. The rendering, however, "*the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus*," (making the last three words govern the whole previous thought,) is amply admissible.

above in the Epistle we have heard of a "law of sin" which is "served by the flesh." And we should unhesitatingly explain this "law" to be identical with that *but for the next verse here*, a still nearer context, in which "the law" is unmistakably the divine moral Code, considered however as *impotent*. Must not this and that be the same? And to call that sacred Code "*the Law of sin and of death*" is not to say that it is sinful and deathful. It need only mean, and we think it does mean, that it is sin's occasion, and death's warrant, by the unrelieved collision of its holiness with fallen man's will. It must command; he, being what he is, must rebel. He rebels; it must condemn. Then comes his Lord to die for him, and to rise again; and the Spirit comes, to unite him to his Lord. And now, from the Law as provoking the helpless, guilty will, and as claiming the sinner's penal death—behold the man is "*freed*." For—(the process is now explained at large) **Ver. 3.** the impossible of the Law—what it could not do, for this was not its function, even to enable us sinners to keep its precept from the soul—God, when He sent His own Son in likeness of flesh of sin, Incarnate, in our identical nature, under all those conditions of earthly life which for us are sin's vehicles and occasions, and as Sin-Offering,* expiatory and reconciling, sentenced sin in the flesh; not pardoned it, observe, but sentenced it. He ordered it to execution; He killed its claim and its power for all who are in Christ. And this, "*in the flesh*," making man's earthly conditions the scene of sin's defeat, for our everlasting encouragement in our "life in the

* Περὶ ἁμαρτίας: the phrase is stamped with a sacrificial speciality by the Greek of the O. T. See *e.g.* Levit. xvi. 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 25, 27. And cp. Heb. x. 8.

flesh." And what was the aim and issue? That the righteous demand (δικαίωμα) of the Law might be fulfilled in us, us who walk not flesh-wise, but Spirit-wise; that we, accepted in Christ, and using the Spirit's power in the daily "walk" of circumstance and experience, might be liberated from the life of self-will, and meet the will of God with simplicity and joy.

Ver. 4

Such, and nothing less or else, was the Law's "*righteous demand*"; an obedience not only universal but also cordial. For its first requirement, "Thou shalt have no other God," meant, in the spiritual heart of it, the dethronement of self from its central place, and the session there of the Lord. But this could never be while there was a reckoning still unsettled between the man and God. Friction there must be while God's Law remained not only violated but unsatisfied, unatoned.* And so it necessarily remained, till the sole adequate Person, one with God, one with man, stepped into the gap; our Peace, our Righteousness, and also by the Holy Ghost our Life. At rest because of His sacrifice, at work by the power of His Spirit, we are now free to love, and divinely enabled to walk in love. Meanwhile the dream of an unsinning perfectness, such as could make a meritorious claim, is not so much negatived as precluded, put far out of the question. For the central truth of the new position is that THE LORD has fully dealt, for us, with the Law's claim that man shall *deserve* acceptance. "Boasting" is inexorably "excluded," to the last, from this new kind of law-fulfilling life. For the "fulfilment" which means legal satisfaction is for ever taken out of our hands by Christ,

* "The way of him that is laden with guilt is exceeding crooked." Prov. xxi. 8 R.V.

and only that humble "fulfilment" is ours which means a restful, unanxious, reverent, unreserved loyalty in practice. To this now our "*mind*," our cast and gravitation of soul, is brought, in the life of acceptance, and in the power of the Spirit.

Ver. 5. **For they** who are flesh-wise, the unchanged children of the self-life, think, "*mind*," have moral affinity and converse with, **the things of the flesh**; but **they who are Spirit-wise, think the things of the Spirit**, His love, joy, peace, and all that holy "fruit." Their liberated and Spirit-bearing life now goes that way, in its true bias.

Ver. 6. **For the mind**, the moral affinity, **of the flesh**, of the self-life, **is death**; it involves the ruin of the soul, in condemnation, and in separation from God; **but the mind of the Spirit**, the affinity given to the believer by the indwelling Holy One, **is life and peace**; it implies union with Christ, our life and our acceptance; it is the state of soul in which He is realized.

Ver. 7. **Because**—this absolute antagonism of the two "*minds*" is such *because*—**the** "mind" **of the flesh is personal hostility** (ἔχθρα) **towards God**; for to God's Law **it is not subject. For indeed it cannot be subject to it**;

Ver. 8. —**those*** **who are in flesh**, surrendered to the life of self as their law, **cannot please God**,† "*cannot meet the wish*" (ἀρέσαι) of Him whose loving but absolute claim is to be Lord of the whole man.

"*They cannot*": it is a moral impossibility. "The Law of God" is, "Thou shalt love Me with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself"; the mind of the

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* We do not translate the δέ. It seems to be best represented in English by connecting the clause only by position with what goes before.

† The Greek lays a solemn emphasis by position on Θεῷ.

flesh is, "I will love my self and its will first and most." Let this be disguised as it may, even from the man himself; it is always the same thing in its essence. It may mean a defiant choice of open evil. It may mean a subtle and almost evanescent preference of literature, or art, or work, or home, to God's will as such. It is in either case "*the mind of the flesh*," a thing which cannot be refined and educated into holiness, but must be surrendered at discretion, as its eternal enemy.

Ver. 9. But you (there is a glad emphasis on "*you*") are not in flesh, but in Spirit, surrendered to the indwelling Presence as your law and secret, on the assumption that (εἴπερ: he suggests not weary misgivings but a true examination) God's Spirit dwells in you; has His home in your hearts, humbly welcomed into a continuous residence. But if any one has not Christ's Spirit, (who is the Spirit as of the Father so of the Son, sent by the Son, to reveal and to impart Him,) that man is not His. He may bear his Lord's name, he may be externally a Christian, he may enjoy the divine Sacraments of union; but he has not "the Thing." The Spirit, evidenced by His holy fruit, is no Indweller there; and the Spirit is our vital Bond with Christ.

Ver. 10. But if Christ is, thus by the Spirit, in you, dwelling by faith in the hearts which the Spirit has "strengthened" to receive Christ (Eph. iii. 16, 17)—true (μὲν), the body is dead, because of sin, the primeval sentence still holds its way *there*; the body is deathful still, it is the body of the Fall; but the Spirit * is life, He is in that body, your secret of power

* We refer the word πνεῦμα here, as throughout the passage, to the Holy Ghost. No other interpretation seems either consistent with the whole context, or adequate to its grandeur.

and peace eternal, **because of righteousness**, because of the merit of your Lord, in which you are accepted, and which has won for you this wonderful Spirit-life.

Then even for the body there is assured a glorious future, organically one with this living present. Let us listen as he goes on: **But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus**, the slain Man, from the dead, **dwells in you, He who raised from the dead Christ Jesus**, the Man so revealed and glorified as the Anointed Saviour, **shall also bring to life your mortal bodies, because of** (διὰ τὸ κτλ *) **His Spirit, dwelling in you.** That "frail temple," once so much defiled, and so defiling, is now precious to the Father because it is the habitation of the Spirit of His Son. Nor only so; that same Spirit, who, by uniting us to Christ, made actual our redemption, shall surely, in ways to us unknown, carry the process to its glorious crown, and be somehow the Efficient Cause of "the redemption of our body."

Ver. 11.

Wonderful is this deep characteristic of the Scripture; its Gospel for the body. In Christ, the body is seen to be something far different from the mere clog, or prison, or chrysalis, of the soul. It is its destined implement, may we not say its mighty wings in prospect, for the life of glory. As invaded by sin, it must needs pass through either death or, at the Lord's Return, an equivalent transfiguration. But as created in God's plan of Human Nature it is for ever congenial to the

* We read thus, not διὰ τοῦ κτλ ("*by means of, by the agency of, His Spirit*"). The two readings have each strong support, but we think the balance of evidence is for the accusative not the genitive. Happily the exegetical difference is not serious. The accusative gives indeed a meaning which may well include that given by the genitive, while it includes other ideas also.

soul, nay, it is necessary to the soul's full action. And whatever be the mysterious mode (it is absolutely hidden from us as yet) of the event of Resurrection, this we know, if only from this Oracle, that the glory of the immortal body will have profound relations with the work of God in the sanctified soul. No mere material sequences will bring it about. It will be "*because of the Spirit*"; and "because of the Spirit *dwelling in you*," as your power for holiness in Christ.*

So the Christian reads the account of his present spiritual wealth, and of his coming completed life, "his perfect consummation and bliss in the eternal glory." Let him take it home, with most humble but quite decisive assurance, as he looks again, and believes again, on his redeeming Lord. For him, in his inexpressible need, God has gone about to provide "so great salvation." He has accepted his person in His Son who died for him. He has not only *forgiven him* through that great Sacrifice, but in it He has "*condemned*," sentenced to chains and death, *his sin*, which is now a doomed thing, beneath his feet, in Christ. And He has given to him, as personal and perpetual Indweller, to be claimed, hailed, and used by humble faith, His own Eternal Spirit, the Spirit of His Son, the Blessed One who, dwelling infinitely in the Head,

* We are aware that ver. 11 has been sometimes interpreted of present blessings for the body; as if the fulness of the Holy Ghost was to effect a quasi-glorification of the body's condition now; exempting it from illness, and at least retarding its decay. But this seems untenable. If the words point this way at all, ought they not to mean a literal exemption from death altogether? But this manifestly was not in the Apostle's mind, if we take his writings as a whole. That spiritual blessings may, and often do, act wonderfully in the life of the body, is most true. But that is not the truth of this verse.

comes to dwell fully in the members, and make Head and members wonderfully one. Now then let him give himself up with joy, thanksgiving, and expectation, to the "*fulfilling of the righteous demand of God's Law*," "*walking Spirit-wise*," with steps moving ever away from self and towards the will of God. Let him meet the world, the devil, and that mysterious "flesh," (all ever in potential presence,) with no less a Name than that of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Let him stand up not as a defeated and disappointed combatant, maimed, half-blinded, half-persuaded to succumb, but as one who treads upon "all the power of the enemy," in Christ, by the indwelling Spirit. And let him reverence his mortal body, even while he "keeps it in subjection," and while he willingly tires it, or gives it to suffer, for his Lord. For it is the temple of the Spirit. It is the casket of the hope of glory.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOLINESS BY THE SPIRIT, AND THE GLORIES THAT SHALL FOLLOW

Romans viii. 12-25

NOW the Apostle goes on to develop these noble premisses into conclusions. How true to himself, and to his Inspirer, is the line he follows! First come the most practical possible of reminders of duty; then, and in profound connexion, the inmost experiences of the regenerate soul in both its joy and its sorrow, and the most radiant and far-reaching prospects of glory to come. We listen still, always remembering that this letter from Corinth to Rome is to reach us too, by way of the City. He who moved His servant to send it to Aquila and Herodion had us too in mind, and has now carried out His purpose. It is open in our hands for our faith, love, hope, life to-day.

St Paul begins with Holiness viewed as Duty, as Debt. He has led us through our vast treasury of privilege and possession. What are we to do with it? Shall we treat it as a museum, in which we may occasionally observe the mysteries of New Nature, and with more or less learning discourse upon them? Shall we treat it as the unwatchful King * of old treated his

* 2 Kings xx. 12, 13.

splendid stores, making them his personal boast, and so betraying them to the very power which one day was to make them all its spoil? No, we are to live upon our Lord's magnificent bounty—to His glory, and in His will. We are rich; but it is for Him. We have His talents; and those talents, in respect of His grace, as distinct from His "gifts," are not one, nor five, nor ten, but ten thousand—for they are Jesus Christ. But we have them all *for Him*. We are free from the law of sin and of death; but we are in perpetual and delightful debt to Him who has freed us. And our debt is—to walk with Him.

"*So, brethren, we are debtors.*" Thus our new paragraph begins. For a moment he turns to say what we owe *no* debt to; even "*the flesh*," the self-life. But it is plain that his main purpose is positive, not negative. He implies in the whole rich context that we are debtors to the Spirit, to the Lord, "to walk Spirit-wise."

What a salutary thought it is! Too often in the Christian Church the great word Holiness has been practically banished to a supposed almost inaccessible background, to the steeps of a spiritual ambition, to a region where a few might with difficulty climb in the quest, men and women who had "leisure to be good," or who perhaps had exceptional instincts for piety. God be thanked, He has at all times kept many consciences alive to the illusion of such a notion; and in our own day, more and more, His mercy brings it home to His children that "this is His will, even the sanctification"—not of some of them, but of all. Far and wide we are reviving to see, as the fathers of our faith saw before us, that whatever else holiness is, it is a sacred and binding *debt*. It is not an ambition; it is a duty. We are bound, every one of us who names the name of Christ,

to be holy, to be separate from evil, to walk by the Spirit.

Alas for the misery of indebtedness, when funds fall short! Whether the unhappy debtor examines his affairs, or guiltily ignores their condition, he is—if his conscience is not dead—a haunted man. But when an honourable indebtedness concurs with ample means, then one of the moral pleasures of life is the punctual scrutiny and discharge. "He hath it by him"; and it is his happiness, as it is assuredly his duty, *not* to "say to his neighbour, Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give" (Prov. iii. 28).

Christian brother, partaker of Christ, and of the Spirit, we also owe, to Him who owns. But it is an indebtedness of the happy type. Once we owed, and there was worse than nothing in the purse. Now we owe, and we have Christ in us, by the Holy Ghost, wherewithal to pay. The eternal Neighbour comes to us, with no frowning look, and shews us His holy demand; to live to-day a life of truth, of purity, of confession of His Name, of unselfish serviceableness, of glad forgiveness, of unbroken patience, of practical sympathy, of the love which seeks not her own. What shall we say? That it is a beautiful ideal, which we should like to realize, and may yet some day seriously attempt? That it is admirable, but impossible? Nay; "we are debtors." And He who claims has first immeasurably given. We have His Son for our acceptance and our life. His very Spirit is in us. Are not these good resources for a genuine solvency? "Say not, Go and come again; I will pay Thee—to-morrow. *Thou hast it by thee!*"

Holiness is beauty. But it is first duty, practical and present, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

So then, brethren, debtors are we—not to the flesh, with a view to living flesh-wise; but to the Spirit—who
Ver. 12. is now both our law and our power—with a view to living Spirit-wise. **For if you are living flesh-wise, you are on the way** (*μέλλετε*) to die. **But if by the Spirit you are doing to death* the practices,** the stratagems, the machinations, **of the body, you will live.** Ah, the body is still there, and is still a seat and vehicle of temptation. "It is for the Lord, and the Lord is for it" (1 Cor. vi. 13). It is the temple of the Spirit. Our call is (1 Cor. vi. 20) to glorify God in it. But all this, *from our point of view*, passes from realization into mere theory, wofully gainsaid by experience, when we let our acceptance in Christ, and our possession in Him of the Almighty Spirit, pass out of use into mere phrase. Say what some men will, we are never for an hour here below exempt from elements and conditions of evil residing not merely around us but within us. There is no stage of life when we can dispense with the power of the Holy Ghost as our victory and deliverance from "*the machinations of the body*." And the body is no separate and as it were minor personality. If the man's body "machinates," it is the man who is the sinner.

But then, thanks be to God, this fact is not the real burthen of the words here. What St Paul has to say is that the man who has the indwelling Spirit has with him, in him, a divine and all-effectual Counter-Agent to the subtlest of his foes. Let him do what we saw him above (vii. 7-25) neglecting to do. Let him with conscious purpose, and firm recollection of his wonderful position and possession (so easily forgotten!), call up the eternal Power which is indeed not himself, though

* *Θανατοῦτε*: observe the present tense, the process is a continuing one.

in himself. Let him do this with *habitual* recollection and simplicity. And he shall be "more than conqueror" where he was so miserably defeated. His path shall be as of one who walks over foes who threatened, but who fell, and who die at his feet. It shall be less a struggle than a march, over a battlefield indeed, yet a field of victory so continuous that it shall be as peace.

"*If by the Spirit you are doing them to death.*" Mark well the words. He says nothing here of things often thought to be of the essence of spiritual remedies; nothing of "will-worship, and humility, and unsparing treatment of the body" (Col. ii. 23); nothing even of fast and prayer. Sacred and precious is self-discipline, the watchful care that act and habit are true to that "temperance" which is a vital ingredient in the Spirit's "fruit" (Gal. v. 22, 23). It is the Lord's own voice (Matt. xxvi. 41) which bids us always "watch and pray"; "praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20). Yes, but these true exercises of the believing soul are after all only as the covering fence around that central secret—our use by faith of the presence and power of "the Holy Ghost given unto us." The Christian who neglects to watch and pray will most surely find that he knows not how to use this his great strength, for he will be losing realization of his oneness with his Lord. But then the man who actually, and in the depth of his being, is "doing to death the practices of the body," is doing so, *immediately*, not by discipline, nor by direct effort, but by the believing use of "the Spirit." Filled with Him, he treads upon the power of the enemy. And that fulness is according to surrendering faith.

Ver. 14. **For as many as are led by God's Spirit, these are God's sons; for you did not receive a spirit of slavery, to take you back again (πάλιν) to fear; no,**

you received a Spirit of adoption to sonship, in which Spirit, surrendered to His holy power, we cry, with no bated, hesitating breath, "Abba, our (ὁ) Father." His argument runs thus; "If you would live indeed, you must do sin to death by the Spirit. And this means, in another aspect, that you must yield yourselves to be led along by the Spirit, with that leading which is sure to conduct you always away from self and into the will of God. You must welcome the Indweller to have His holy way with your springs of thought and will. So, and only so, will you truly answer the idea, the description, 'sons of God'—that glorious term, never to be *satisfied* by the relation of mere creaturehood, or by that of merely exterior sanctification, mere membership in a community of men, though it be the Visible Church itself. But if you so meet sin by the Spirit, if you are so led by the Spirit, you do shew yourselves nothing less than God's own sons. He has called you to nothing lower than sonship; to vital connexion with a divine Father's life, and to the eternal embraces of His love. For when He gave and you received the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of promise, who reveals Christ and joins you to Him, what did that Spirit do, in His heavenly operation? Did He lead you back to the old position, in which you shrunk from God, as from a Master who bound you against your will? No, He shewed you that in the Only Son you are nothing less than sons, welcomed into the inmost home of eternal life and love. You found yourselves indescribably near the Father's heart, because accepted, and new-created, in His Own Beloved. And so you learnt the happy, confident call of the child, 'Father, O Father; Our Father, Abba.'" *

Ver. 15.

* The Aramaic "*Abba*," used by our Lord in His hour of darkness, had probably become an almost personal Name to the believers.

So it was, and so it is. The living member of Christ is nothing less than the dear child of God. He is other things besides; he is disciple, follower, bondservant. He never ceases to be bondservant, though here he is expressly told that he has received no "spirit of slavery." So far as "slavery" means service forced against the will, he has done with this, in Christ. But so far as it means service rendered by one who is his master's absolute property, he has entered into its depths, for ever. Yet all this is exterior as it were to that inmost fact, that he is—in a sense ultimate, and which alone really fulfils the word—the child, the son, of God. He is dearer than he can know to his Father. He is more welcome than he can ever realize to take his Father at His word, and lean upon His heart, and tell Him all.

Ver. 16. **The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are God's children**, born children, τεκνά. The Holy One, on His part, makes the once cold, reluctant, apprehensive heart "know and believe the love of God." He "sheds abroad God's love in it." He brings home to consciousness and insight the "sober certainty" of the promises of the Word; that Word through which, above all other means, He speaks. He shews to the man "the things of Christ," the Beloved, in whom he has the adoption and the regeneration; making him see, as souls see, what a paternal welcome there *must* be for those who are "in HIM." And then, on the other part, the believer meets Spirit with spirit. He responds to the revealed paternal smile with not merely a subject's loyalty but a son's deep love; deep, reverent, tender, genuine love. "Doubtless thou art His own child," says the Spirit. "Doubtless He is my Father," says our wondering, believing, seeing spirit in response.

Ver. 17. **But if children, then also heirs; God's heirs, Christ's** co-heirs, possessors in prospect of our Father's heaven (towards which the whole argument now gravitates), in union of interest and life with our First-born Brother, in whom lies our right. From one hand a gift, infinitely merciful and surprising, that unseen bliss will be from another the lawful portion of the lawful child, one with the Beloved of the Father. Such heirs we are, if indeed we share His sufferings, those deep but hallowed pains which will surely come to us as we live in and for Him in a fallen world, that we may also share His glory, for which that path of sorrow is, not indeed the meriting, but the capacitating, preparation.

Amidst the truths of life and love, of the Son, of the Spirit, of the Father, he thus throws in the truth of pain. Let us not forget it. In one form or another, it is for all "*the children*." Not all are martyrs, not all are exiles or captives, not all are called as a fact to meet open insults in a defiant world of paganism or unbelief. Many are still so called, as many were at first, and as many will be to the end; for "the world" is no more now than it ever was in love with God, and with His children as such. But even for those whose path is—not by themselves but the Lord—most protected, there must be "*suffering*," somehow, sooner, later, in this present life, if they are really living the life of the Spirit, the life of the child of God, "paying the debt" of daily holiness, even in its humblest and gentlest forms. We must observe, by the way, that it is to *such* sufferings, and not to sorrows in general, that the reference lies here. The Lord's heart is open for all the griefs of His people, and He can use them all for their blessing and for His ends. But the "suffering ***with Him***" must imply a pain *due to our union*. It

must be involved in our being His members, used by the Head for His work. It must be the hurt of His "hand" or "foot" in subserving His sovereign thought. What will the bliss be of the corresponding sequel! "That we may *share His glory*"; not merely, "be glorified," but share His glory; a splendour of life, joy, and power whose eternal law and soul will be, union with Him who died for us and rose again.

Now towards that prospect St Paul's whole thought sets, as the waters set towards the moon, and the mention of that glory, after suffering, draws him to a sight of the mighty "plurity" of the glory. **For I** Ver. 18. **reckon,** "*I calculate*"—word of sublimest *prose*, more moving here than any poetry, because it bids us handle the hope of glory *as a fact*—**that not worthy** of mention are **the sufferings of the present season** (καιροῦ, not χρόνου; he thinks of time not in its length but in its limit), **in view of the glory about to be unveiled upon us** (εἰς ἡμᾶς), unveiled, and then heaped upon us, in its golden fulness.* **For**—he is going to give us Ver. 19. a deep reason for his "calculation"; wonderfully characteristic of the Gospel. It is that the final glory of the saints will be a crisis of mysterious blessing for the whole created Universe.† In ways absolutely unknown, certainly as regards anything said in this passage, but none the less divinely fit and sure, the ultimate and eternal manifestation of Christ Mystical, the Perfect Head with His perfected members, will be the occasion, and in some sense too the cause, the

* With this verse on his lips, unfinished, Calvin died, 1564.

† We cannot think that the κτίσις of this passage refers only, as some would have it, *to humanity* (as Mark xvi. 15, Col. i. 23). The κτίσις is a something which was "subjected" *involuntarily*, and so, surely, not guiltily. This could not be said of humanity.

mediating cause, of the emancipation of "Nature," in its heights and depths, from the cancer of decay, and its entrance on an endless æon of indissoluble life and splendour. Doubtless that goal shall be reached through long processes and intense crises of strife and death. "Nature," like the saint, may need to pass to glory through a tomb. But the issue will indeed be glory, when He who is the Head at once of "Nature,"* of the heavenly nations, and of redeemed man, shall bid the vast periods of conflict and dissolution cease, in the hour of eternal purpose, and shall manifestly "*be* what He *is*" to the mighty total.

With such a prospect natural philosophy has nothing to do. Its own laws of observation and tabulation forbid it to make a single affirmation of what the Universe shall be, or shall not be, under new and unknown conditions. Revelation, with no arbitrary voice, but as the authorized while reserved messenger of THE MAKER, and standing by the open Grave of the Resurrection, announces that there are to be profoundly new conditions, and that they bear a relation inscrutable but necessary to the coming glorification of Christ and His Church. And what we now see and feel as the imperfections and shocks and seeming failures of the Universe, so we learn from this voice, a voice so quiet yet so triumphant, are only as it were the throes of birth, in which "Nature," impersonal indeed but so to speak animated by the thinking of the intelligent orders who are a part of her universal being, preludes her wonderful future.

Ver. 19. **For the longing outlook of the creation is expecting—the unveiling of the sons of God.**

* See Col. i. 15, 16. The Lord's Headship of Creation, explicitly revealed there, is seen as it were only just below the surface here.

For to vanity, to evil, to failure and decay, **the crea-**
Ver. 20. **tion was subjected not willingly, but because of Him who made it subject**; its Lord and Sustainer, who in His inscrutable but holy will bade physical evil correspond to the moral evil of His conscious fallen creatures, angels or men. So that there is a deeper connexion than we can yet analyse between sin, the primal and central evil, and everything that is really wreck or pain. But this
Ver. 21. "subjection," under His *fiat*, was **in hope, because the creation itself shall be liberated from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God**, the freedom brought in for *it* by *their* eternal liberation from the last relics of the
Ver. 22. Fall. **For we know**, by observation of natural evil, in the light of the promises, **that the whole creation is uttering a common groan** of burthen and yearning, **and suffering a common birth-pang, even till now**, when the Gospel has heralded the coming glory.
Ver. 23. **Nor only so, but even the actual possessors of the firstfruits of the Spirit**, possessors of that presence of the Holy One in them now, which is the sure pledge of His eternal fulness yet to come, **even we ourselves**, richly blest as we are in our wonderful Spirit-life, **yet in ourselves are groaning**, burthened still with mortal conditions pregnant of temptation, lying not around us only but deep within (ἐν ἑαυτοῖς), **expecting adoption**, full instatement into the fruition of the sonship which already is ours, even **the redemption of our body.**

From the coming glories of the Universe he returns, in the consciousness of an inspired but human heart, to the present discipline and burthen of the Christian. Let us observe the noble candour of the words; this "*groan*" interposed in the midst of such a song of the Spirit and

of glory. He has no ambition to pose as the possessor of an impossible experience. He is more than conqueror; but he is conscious of his foes. The Holy Ghost is in him; he does the body's practices victoriously to death by the Holy Ghost. But the body is there, as the seat and vehicle of manifold temptation. And though there is a joy in victory which can sometimes make even the presence of temptation seem "all joy" (Jas i. 2), he knows that something "far better" is yet to come. His longing is not merely for a personal victory, but for an eternally unhindered service. That will not fully be his till his whole being is actually, as well as in covenant, redeemed. That will not be till not the spirit only but the body is delivered from the last dark traces of the Fall, in the resurrection hour.

Ver. 24. **For it is as to our** (τῇ) **hope that we were saved.** When the Lord laid hold of us we were indeed saved,* but with a salvation which was only in part actual. Its total was not to be realized till the whole being was in actual salvation. Such salvation (see below, xiii. 11) was coincident in prospect with "the Hope," "that blessed Hope,"† the Lord's Return and the resurrection glory. So, to paraphrase this clause, "*It was in the sense of the Hope that we were saved.*"‡ **But a hope in sight is not a hope; for, what a man sees, why does he hope for?** Hope, in that case, has, in its nature, expired in possession. And our full "salvation" *is* a hope; it is bound up with a Promise not yet fulfilled; therefore, in its nature,

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* See the *perfect* participle, σεσωσμένοι, Eph. ii. 5, 8.

† Is ἡ ἐλπὶς ever used in the N.T. in any other connexion than this?

‡ Luther's rendering is good as a paraphrase, *Wir sind wohl selig, doch in der Hoffnung*.

it is still unseen, still unattained. But then, it is certain; it is infinitely valid; it is worth any waiting for. **But if, for what we do not see, we do hope,**
Ver. 24. looking on good grounds for the sunrise in the dark east, **with patience we expect it.** "*With patience*," literally "*through patience*," δι' ὑπομονῆς. The "patience" is as it were the means, the secret, of the waiting; "patience," that noble word of the New Testament vocabulary, the saint's active submission, submissive action, beneath the will of God. It is no nerveless, motionless prostration; it is the going on and upward, step by step, as the man "waits upon the Lord, and walks, and does not faint."

CHAPTER XIX

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER IN THE SAINTS: THEIR PRESENT AND ETERNAL WELFARE IN THE LOVE OF GOD

ROMANS viii. 26-39

IN the last paragraph the music of this glorious didactic prophecy passed, in some solemn phrases, into the minor mood. "*If we share His sufferings*"; "*The sufferings of this present season*"; "*We groan within ourselves*"; "*In the sense of our hope we were saved.*" All is well. The deep harmony of the Christian's full experience, if it is full downwards as well as upwards, demands sometimes such tones; and they are all music, for they all express a life in Christ, lived by the power of the Holy Ghost. But now the strain is to ascend again into its largest and most triumphant manner. We are now to hear how our salvation, though its ultimate issues are still things of hope, is itself a thing of eternity—from everlasting to everlasting. We are to be made sure that all things are working now, in concurrent action, for the believer's good; and that his justification is sure; and that his glory is so certain that its future is, from his Lord's point of sight, present; and that nothing, absolutely nothing, shall separate him from the eternal Love.

But first comes one most deep and tender word, the last of its kind in the long argument, about the presence

and power of the Holy Ghost. The Apostle has the "groan" of the Christian still in his ear, in his heart; in fact, it is his own. And he has just pointed himself and his fellow believers to the coming glory, as to a wonderful antidote; a prospect which is at once great in itself and unspeakably suggestive of *the greatness* given to the most suffering and tempted saint by his union with his Lord. As if to say to the pilgrim, in his moment of distress, "Remember, you are more to God than you can possibly know; He has made you such, in Christ, that universal Nature is concerned in the prospect of your glory." But now, as if nothing must suffice but what is directly divine, he bids him remember also the presence in him of the Eternal Spirit, as his mighty but tenderest indwelling Friend. Even as "that blessed Hope," so, "*likewise also*," this blessed present Person, is the weak one's power. He takes the man in his bewilderment, when troubles from without press him, and fears from within make him groan, and he is in sore need, yet at a loss for the right cry. And He moves in the tired soul, and breathes Himself into its thought, and His mysterious "groan" of divine yearning mingles with our groan of burthen, and the man's longings go out above all things not towards rest but towards God and His will. So the Christian's innermost and ruling desire is both fixed and animated by the blessed Indweller, and he seeks what the Lord will love to grant, even Himself and whatever shall please Him. The man prays aright, as to the essence of the prayer, because (what a divine miracle is put before us in the words!) the Holy Ghost, immanent in him, prays through him.

Thus we venture, in advance, to explain the sentences which now follow. It is true that St Paul does not

explicitly say that the Spirit makes intercession *in* us, as well as *for* us. But must it not be so? For *where is He*, from the point of view of Christian life, but *in us*?

Ver. 26. Then, in the same way, the Spirit also—as well as "the hope"—helps, as with a clasping, supporting hand (*συναντιλαμβάνεται*), our weakness,* our shortness and bewilderment of insight, our feebleness of faith. For what we should pray for as we ought, we do not know; but the Spirit Itself interposes to intercede (*ὑπερεντυγχάνει*) for us, with groanings unutterable; but (whatever be the utterance or no utter-

Ver. 27. ance) the Searcher of our (*τὰς*) hearts knows what is the mind, the purport, of the Spirit; because God-wise,† with divine insight and sympathy, the Spirit with the Father, He intercedes for saints.

Did He not so intercede for Paul, and in him, fourteen years before these words were written, when (2 Cor. xii. 7-10) the man thrice asked that "the thorn" might be removed, and the Master gave him a better blessing, the victorious overshadowing power? Did He not so intercede for Monnica, and in her, when she sought with prayers and tears to keep her rebellious Augustine by her, and the Lord let him fly from her side—to Italy, to Ambrose, and so to conversion?‡

But the strain rises now, finally and fully, into the rest and triumph of faith. "*We know not* what we should pray for as we ought"; and the blessed Spirit meets this deep need in His own way. And this, with all else that we have in Christ, reminds us of a somewhat

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* Read *ἀσθενείᾳ*.

† So we venture to render *κατὰ Θεόν*.

‡ *Confessiones*, v, 8.

that "*we know*" indeed; namely, that all things, favourable or not in themselves, concur in blessing for the saints. And then he looks backward (or rather, upward) into eternity, and sees the throne, and the King with His sovereign will, and the lines of perfect and infallible plan and provision which stretch from that Centre to infinity. These "*saints*," who are they? From one view-point, they are simply sinners who have seen themselves, and "fled for refuge to the" one possible "hope"; a "hope set before" every soul that cares to win it. From another view-point, that of the eternal Mind and Order, they are those whom, for reasons infinitely wise and just, but wholly hidden in Himself, the Lord has chosen to be His own for ever, so that His choice takes effect in their conversion, their acceptance, their spiritual transformation, and their glory.

There, as regards this great passage, the thought rests and ceases—in the glorification of the saints. What their Glorifier will do with them, and through them, thus glorified, is another matter. Assuredly He will *make use* of them in His eternal kingdom. The Church, made most blessed for ever, is yet beatified, ultimately, not for itself but for its Head, and for His Father. It is to be, in its final perfectness, "an habitation of God, in the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 22). Is He not so to possess it that the Universe shall see Him in it, in a manner and degree now unknown and unimaginable? Is not the endless "service" of the elect to be such that all orders of being shall through them behold and adore the glory of the Christ of God? For ever they will be what they here become, the bondservants of their Redeeming Lord, His Bride, His vehicle of power and blessing; "having of their own nothing, in Him all, and all for Him." No self-full

exaltations await them in the place of light; or the whole history of sin would begin over again, in a new æon. No celestial Pharisaism will be their spirit; a look downward upon less blessed regions of existence, as from a sanctuary of their own. Who can tell what ministries of boundless love will be the expression of their life of inexpressible and inexhaustible joy? Always, like Gabriel, "in the presence," will they not always also, like him, "be sent" (Luke i. 19) on the messages of their glorious Head, in whom at length, in the "divine event," "all things shall be gathered together"?

But this is not the thought of the passage now in our hands. Here, as we have said, the thought terminates in the final glorification of the saints of God, as the immediate goal of the process of their redemption.

Ver. 28. **But we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, even for those who, purpose-wise, are His called ones.** "*We know it*," with the cognition of faith; that is to say, because He, absolutely trustworthy, guarantees it by His character, and by His word. Deep, nay insoluble is the mystery, from every other point of view. The lovers of the Lord are indeed unable to explain, to themselves or others, how this concurrence of "all things" works out its infallible issues in them. And the observer from outside cannot understand their certainty that it is so. But the fact is there, given and assured, not by speculation upon events, but by personal knowledge of an Eternal Person. "Love God, and thou shalt know."*

They "love God," with a love perfectly unartificial, the genuine affection of human hearts, hearts not the less human because divinely new-created, regenerated from

* See a noble poem by James Montgomery, *The Lot of the Righteous*.

above. Their immediate consciousness is just this; we love Him. Not, we have read the book of life; we have had a glimpse of the eternal purpose in itself; we have heard our names recited in a roll of the chosen; but, we love Him. We have found in Him the eternal Love. In Him we have peace, purity, and that deep, final satisfaction, that view of "the King in His beauty," which is the *summum bonum* of the creature. It was our fault that we saw it no sooner, that we loved Him no sooner. It is the duty of every soul that He has made to reflect upon its need of Him, and upon the fact that it owes it to Him to love Him in His holy beauty of eternal Love. If we could not it was because we would not. If you cannot it is because, somehow and somewhere, you will not; will not put yourselves without reserve in the way of the sight. "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good"; oh love the eternal Love.

But those who thus simply and genuinely love God are also, on the other side, "*purpose-wise, His called ones*"; "*called*," in the sense which we have found above (p. 19) to be consistently traceable in the Epistles; not merely invited, but brought in; not evangelized only, but converted. In each case of the happy company, the man, the woman, came to Christ, came to love God with the freest possible coming of the will, the heart. Yet each, having come, had the Lord to thank for the coming. The human personality had traced its orbit of will and deed, as truly as when it willed to sin and to rebel. But lo, in ways past our finding out, its free track lay along a previous track of the purpose of the Eternal; its free "*I will*" was the precise and fore-ordered correspondence to His "*Thou shalt.*" It was the act of man; it was the grace of God.

Can we get below such a statement, or above it?

If we are right in our reading of the whole teaching of Scripture on the sovereignty of God, our thoughts upon it, practically, must sink down, and must rest, just here. The doctrine of the Choice of God, in its sacred mystery, refuses—so we humbly think—to be explained away so as to mean in effect little but the choice of man. But then the doctrine is "a lamp, not a sun." It is presented to us everywhere, and not least in this Epistle, as a truth not meant to explain everything, but to enforce *this* thing—that the man who as a fact loves the eternal Love has to thank not himself but that Love that his eyes, guiltily shut, were effectually opened. Not one link in the chain of actual Redemption is of our forging—or the whole would indeed be fragile. It is "of Him" that we, in this great matter, will as we ought to will. I ought to have loved God always. It is of His mere mercy that I love Him now.

With this lesson of uttermost humiliation the truth of the heavenly Choice, and its effectual Call, brings us also that of an encouragement altogether divine. Such a "purpose" is no fluctuating thing, shifting with the currents of time. Such a call to such an embrace means a tenacity, as well as a welcome, worthy of God. "Who shall separate us?" "Neither shall any pluck them out of My Father's hand." And this is the motive of the words in this wonderful context, where everything is made to bear on *the safety* of the children of God, in the midst of all imaginable dangers.

Ver. 29. **For whom He knew beforehand,** with a foreknowledge which, in this argument, can mean nothing short of foredecision*—no mere foreknowledge of what they would do, but rather of what He would

* See *e.g.* xi. 2; Acts ii. 23; 1 Pet. i. 2, 20.

do for them—those **He also set apart beforehand, for conformation,** deep and genuine, a resemblance due to kindred *being*,* **to the image,** the manifested Countenance, **of His Son, that He might be Firstborn amongst many brethren,** surrounded by the circling host of kindred faces, congenial beings, His Father's children by their union with Himself. So, as ever in the Scriptures, mystery bears full on character. The man is saved that he may be holy. His "*predestination*" † is not merely not to perish, but to be made like Christ, in a spiritual transformation, coming out in the moral features of the family of heaven. And all bears ultimately on the glory of Christ. The gathered saints are an organism, a family, before the Father; and their vital Centre is the Beloved Son, who sees in their true sonship the fruit of "the travail of His soul."

Ver. 30. **But those whom He thus set apart beforehand, He also called,** effectually drew so as truly and freely to choose Christ; **and those whom He** thus **called** to Christ, **He also justified** in Christ, in that great way of propitiation and faith of which the Epistle has so largely spoken; **but** ‡ **those whom He** thus **justified, He also glorified.** "*Glorified*": it is a marvellous past tense. It reminds us that in this passage we are placed, as it were, upon the mountain of the Throne; our finite thought is allowed to speak for once (however little it understands

* Συμμόρφους: μορφὴ is likeness not by accident but of essence. The Greek here is literally, "conformed ones *of* the image, etc."; as if their similitude made them part of that which they resembled.

† Let us banish from the idea of "*predestination*" all thought of a mechanical pagan *destiny*, and use it of the sure purpose of the living and loving God.

‡ Δέ: the "*but*" of logic. He is *proving* the security of the prospect of *glory*.

it) the language of eternity, to utter the facts as the Eternal sees them. To Him, the pilgrim is already in the immortal Country; the bondservant is already at his day's end, receiving His Master's "Well done, good and faithful." He to whom time is not as it is to us thus sees His purposes complete, always and for ever. We see through His sight, in hearing His word about it. So for us, in wonderful paradox, our glorification is presented, as truly as our call, in terms of accomplished fact.

Here, in a certain sense, the long golden chain of *the doctrine* of the Epistle ends—in the hand of the King who thus crowns the sinners whose redemption, faith, acceptance, and holiness, He had, in the Heaven of His own Being, fore-willed and fore-ordered, "before the world began," above all time. What remains of the chapter is the application of the doctrine. But what an application! The Apostle brings his converts out into the open field of trial, and bids them *use* his doctrine *there*. Are they thus dear to the Father in the Son? Is their every need thus met? Is their guilt cancelled in Christ's mighty merit? Is their existence filled with Christ's eternal Spirit? Is sin thus cast beneath their feet, and is such a heaven opened above their heads? "Then what have they to fear," before man, or before God? What power in the universe, of whatever order of being, can really hurt them? For what can separate them from their portion in their glorified Lord, and in His Father's love in Him? Again we listen, with Tertius, as the voice goes on:

Ver. 31. What therefore shall we say in view of these things? If God is for us, who is against us? Hε*

* Ὅς γε: the particle deeply *underlines* the pronoun.

who did not spare His own true (*ἰδίου*) **Son, but for us all handed Him over** to that awful expiatory, propitiatory, darkness and death, so that He was "pleased to bruise Him, to put Him to grief" (Isai. liii. 10), all for His own great glory, but, no whit the less, all for our pure blessing; **how** (wonderful "*how*"!) **shall He not also with Him,** because *all* is included and involved in Him who is the Father's All, **give us also freely all things** (*τὰ πάντα*, "*the all* things that are")? And do we want to be sure that He will not, after all, find a flaw in our claim, and cast us in His court? **Who will lodge a charge against God's chosen ones?** Will God—**who justifies them?*** **Who will condemn them,** if the charge *is* lodged? Will Christ—who died, nay rather who rose, who is on the right hand of God, who is actually (*καὶ*) interceding for us? (Observe this one mention in the whole Epistle of His Ascension, and His action for us above, as He is, by the fact of His Session on the Throne, our sure Channel of eternal blessing, unworthy that we are.) Do we need assurance, amidst "the sufferings of this present time," that through them always the invincible hands of Christ clasp us, with untired love? We "look upon the covenant" of our acceptance and life in Him who died for us, and who lives both for and in us, and we meet the fiercest buffet of these waves in peace. **Who shall sunder us from the love of Christ?** There rise before him, as he asks, like so many angry personalities,† the outward woes of the pilgrimage. **Tribulation? or Perplexity? or Persecution? or Famine?**

Ver. 32.

Vers. 33.

Ver. 35.

* Ὁ δικαιῶν: we adopt the interrogative rendering of all the clauses here. It is equally good as grammar, and far more congenial to the glowing context.

† Observe the *τίς* of the question, not *τί*.

or Nakedness? or Peril? or Sword? As it stands written,

Ver. 36. in that deep song of anguish and faith (Psal. xliv.) in which the elder Church, one with us in deep continuity, tells her story of affliction, "For Thy sake we are done to death all the day long; we have been reckoned, estimated, as sheep of slaughter."

Ver. 37. Even so. But in these things, all of them, we more than conquer; not only do we tread upon our foes; we spoil them, we find them occasions of glorious

Ver. 38. gain,* through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, life with its natural allurements or its bewildering toils, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,† whatever Orders of being unfriendly to Christ and His saints the vast Unseen contains, nor present things, nor things to come, in all the boundless field of circumstance and contingency, nor height, nor depth, in the illimitable sphere of space, nor any other creature, no thing, no being, under the Uncreated One, shall be able to sunder us, "*us*" with an emphasis upon the word and thought (ἡμᾶς χωρίσαι), from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord — from the eternal embrace wherein the Father embosoms the Son, and, in the Son, all who are one with Him.

So once more the divine music rolls itself out into the blessed Name. We have heard the previous cadences as they came in their order; "Jesus our Lord, who was delivered because of our offences, and was raised again because of our justification" (iv. 25); "That grace might reign, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 21); "The gift of God is eternal life, in Jesus Christ our Lord" (vi. 23);

* Cp. 1 Cor. iii. 22: "All things *are yours*, whether life *or death*."

† Strong documentary evidence favours the transference of "*powers*" to a place after "*things to come*." But surely rhythm, and the affinity of words, look the other way.

"I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (vii. 25). Like the theme of a fugue it has sounded on, deep and high; still, always, "our Lord Jesus Christ," who is all things, and in all, and for all, to His happy believing members. And now all is gathered up into this. Our "Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption" (1 Cor. i. 33), the golden burthens of the third chapter, and the sixth, and the eighth, are all, in their living ultimate essence, "Jesus Christ our Lord." He makes every truth, every doctrine of peace and holiness, every sure premiss and indissoluble inference, to be life as well as light. He is pardon, and sanctity, and heaven. Here, finally, the Eternal Love is seen not as it were diffused into infinity, but gathered up wholly and for ever in Him. Therefore to be in Him is to be in It. It is to be within the clasp which surrounds the Beloved of the Father.

Some years ago we remember reading this passage, this close of the eighth chapter, under moving circumstances. On a cloudless January night, late arrived in Rome, we stood in the Coliseum, a party of friends from England. Orion, the giant with the sword, glimmered like a spectre, the spectre of persecution, above the huge precinct; for the full moon, high in the heavens, overpowered the stars. By its light we read from a little Testament these words, written so long ago to be read in that same City; written by the man whose dust now sleeps at Tre Fontane, where the executioner dismissed him to be with Christ; written to men and women some of whom at least, in all human likelihood, suffered in that same Amphitheatre, raised only twenty-two years after Paul wrote to the Romans, and soon made the scene of countless martyrdoms. "Do you want a

relic?" said a Pope to some eager visitor. "Gather dust from the Coliseum; it is all the martyrs."

We recited the words of the Epistle, and gave thanks to Him who had there triumphed in His saints over life and death, over beasts, and men, and demons. Then we thought of the inmost factors in that great victory; Truth and Life. They "knew whom they had believed"—their Sacrifice, their Head, their King. He whom they had believed lived in them, and they in Him, by the Holy Ghost given to them. Then we thought of ourselves, in our circumstances so totally different on the surface, yet carrying the same needs in their depths. Are we too to overcome, in "the things present" of our modern world, and in face of "the things to come" yet upon the earth? Are we to be "more than conquerors," winning blessing out of all things, and really living "in our own generation" (Acts xiii. 36) as the bondmen of Christ and the sons of God? Then for us also the absolute necessities are —the same Truth, and the same Life. And they are ours, thanks be to the Name of our salvation. Time hath no more dominion over them, because death hath no more dominion over Him. For us too Jesus died. In us too, by the Holy Ghost, He lives.

CHAPTER XX

THE SORROWFUL PROBLEM: JEWISH UNBELIEF; DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

ROMANS ix. 1-33

WE may well think that again there was silence awhile in that Corinthian chamber, when Tertius had duly inscribed the last words we have studied. A "silence in heaven" follows, in the Apocalypse (viii. 1), the vision of the white hosts of the redeemed, gathered at last, in their eternal jubilation, before the throne and the Lamb. A silence in the soul is the fittest immediate sequel to such a revelation of grace and glory as has passed before us here. And did not the man whose work it was to utter it, and whose personal experience was as it were the informing soul of the whole argument of the Epistle from the first, and not least in this last sacred pæan of faith, keep silence when he had done, hushed and tired by this "exceeding weight" of grace and glory?

But he has a great deal more to say to the Romans, and in due time the pen obeys the voice again. What will the next theme be? It will be a pathetic and significant contrast to the last; a lament, a discussion, an instruction, and then a prophecy, about not himself and his happy fellow-saints, but poor self-blinded unbelieving Israel.

The occurrence of that subject exactly here is true to the inmost nature of the Gospel. The Apostle has just been counting up the wealth of salvation, and claiming it all, as present and eternal property, for himself and his brethren in the Lord. Justifying Righteousness, Liberty from Sin in Christ, the Indwelling Spirit, electing Love, coming and certain Glory, all have been recounted, and asserted, and embraced. *Is it selfish*, this great joy of possession and prospect? Let those say so who see these things only from outside. Make proof of what they are in their interior, enter into them, learn yourself what it is to have peace with God, to receive the Spirit, to expect the eternal glory; and you will find that nothing is so sure to expand the heart towards other men as the personal reception into it of the Truth and Life of God in Christ. It is possible to hold a true creed—and to be spiritually hard and selfish. But is it possible so to be when not only the creed is held, but the Lord of it, its Heart and Life, is received with wonder and great joy? The man whose certainties, whose riches, whose freedom, are all consciously *in Him*, cannot but love his neighbour, and long that he too should come into "the secret of the Lord."

So St Paul, just at this point of the Epistle, turns with a peculiar intensity of grief and yearning towards the Israel which he had once led, and now had left, because they would not come with him to Christ. His natural and his spiritual sympathies all alike go out to this self-afflicting people, so privileged, so divinely loved, and now so blind. Oh that he could offer any sacrifice that would bring them reconciled, humbled, happy, to the feet of the true Christ! Oh that they might see the fallacy of their own way of

salvation, and submit to the way of Christ, taking His yoke, and finding rest to their souls! Why do they not do it? Why does not the light which convinced him shine on them? Why should not the whole Sanhedrin say, "Lord, what wouldst Thou have us to do?" Why does not the fair beauty of the Son of God make them too "count all things but loss" for Him? Why do not the voices of the Prophets prove to them, as they do now to Paul, absolutely convincing of the historical as well as spiritual claims of the Man of Calvary? Has the promise failed? Has God done with the race to which He guaranteed such a perpetuity of blessing? No, that cannot be. He looks again, and he sees in the whole past a long warning that, while an outer circle of benefits might affect the nation, the inner circle, the light and life of God indeed, embraced "a remnant" only; even from the day when Isaac and not Ishmael was made heir of Abraham. And then he ponders the impenetrable mystery of the relation of the Infinite Will to human wills; he remembers how, in a way whose full reasons are unknowable, (but they are good, for they are in God,) the Infinite Will has to do with our willing; genuine and responsible though our willing is. And before that opaque veil he rests. He knows that only righteousness and love is behind it; but he knows that *it is* a veil, and that in front of it man's thought must cease and be silent. Sin is altogether man's fault. But when man turns from sin it is all God's mercy, free, special, distinguishing. Be silent, and trust Him, O man whom He has made. Remember, He *has made* thee. It is not only that He is greater than thou, or stronger; but He has made thee. Be reasonably willing to trust, out of sight, the reasons of thy MAKER.

Then he turns again with new regrets and yearnings to the thought of that wonderful Gospel which was meant for Israel and for the world, but which Israel rejected, and now would fain check on its way to the world. Lastly, he recalls the future, still full of eternal promises for the chosen race, and through them full of blessing for the world; till he rises at length from perplexity and anguish, and the wreck of once eager expectations, into that great Doxology in which he blesses the Eternal Sovereign for the very mystery of His ways, and adores Him because He is His own eternal End.

Ver. 1. **Truth I speak in Christ**, speaking as the member of the All-Truthful; **I do not lie, my conscience, in the Holy Ghost**, informed and governed by Him, bearing me concurrent witness—the soul within affirming to itself the word spoken without to others—

Ver. 2. **that I have great grief, and my heart has incessant pain**, yes, the heart in which (v. 5) the Spirit has "poured out" God's love and joy; there is room for both experiences in its human depths.

Ver. 3. **For I was wishing, I myself, to be anathema from Christ**, to be devoted to eternal separation from Him; awful dream of uttermost sacrifice, made impossible only because it would mean self-robbery from the Lord who had bought him; a spiritual suicide by sin—

Ver. 4. **for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen flesh-wise. For they are** (οἵτινές εἰσιν) Israelites, bearers of the glorious theocratic name, sons of the "Prince with God" (Gen. xxxii. 28); **theirs is the adoption**, the call to be Jehovah's own filial race, "His son, His firstborn" (Exod. iv. 22) of the peoples; **and the glory**, the Shechinah of the Eternal Presence, sacramentally seen in Tabernacle and Temple, spiritually spread over the

race; **and the Covenants**, with Abraham, and Isaac, and Levi, and Moses, and Aaron, and Phinehas, and David; **and the Legislation**, the holy Moral Code, **and the Ritual**, with its divinely ordered symbolism, that vast Parable of Christ, **and the Promises**, of "the pleasant land," and the perpetual favour, and the coming Lord; Ver. 5. **theirs are the Fathers**, patriarchs, and priests, and kings; **and out of them, as to what is flesh-wise, is the Christ,—He who is over all things, God, blessed to all eternity. Amen.***

It is indeed a splendid roll of honours, recited over this race "separate among the nations," a race which to-day as much as ever remains the enigma of history, to be solved only by Revelation. "*The Jews, your Majesty*," was the reply of Frederick the Great's old believing courtier, when asked with a smile for the credentials of the Bible; the short answer silenced the Encyclopædist King. It is indeed a riddle, made of indissoluble facts, this people everywhere dispersed, yet everywhere individual; scribes of a Book which has profoundly influenced mankind, and which is recognized by the most various races as an august and lawful claimant to be divine, yet themselves, in so many aspects, provincial to the heart; historians of their own glories, but at least equally of their own unworthiness and disgrace; transmitters of predictions which may be slighted, but can never, as a whole, be explained away, yet obstinate deniers of the majestic fulfilment in the Lord of Christendom; human in every fault and imperfection, yet so concerned in bringing to man the message of the Divine that Jesus Himself said of them

* For this rendering, rather than the alternative, "*Blessed for ever be the God who is over all*," see the reasons offered below, p. 261.

(John iv. 22), "Salvation comes from the Jews." On this wonderful race this its most illustrious member (after his Lord) here fixes his eyes, full of tears. He sees their glories pass before him—and then realizes the spiritual squalor and misery of their rejection of the Christ of God. He groans, and in real agony asks how it can be. One thing only cannot be; the promises have not failed; there has been no failure in the Promiser. What may seem such is rather man's misreading of the promise.

Ver. 6. But it is not as though the word of God has been thrown out (ἐκπέπτωκε), that "word" whose divine honour was dearer to him than even that of his people. For not all who come from Israel constitute

Ver. 7. Israel; nor, because they are seed of Abraham, are they all his children, in the sense of family life and rights; but "In Isaac shall a seed be called thee" (Gen. xxi. 12); Isaac, and not any son of thy body begotten, is father of those whom thou shalt claim

Ver. 8. as thy covenant-race. That is to say, not the children of his (τῆς) flesh are the children of his (τοῦ) God; no, the children of the promise, indicated and limited by its developed terms, are reckoned as seed.

Ver. 9. For of the promise this was the word (Gen. xviii. 10, 14), "According to this time I will come, and Sarah, she and not *any* spouse of thine; no Hagar, no Keturah, but Sarah, shall have a son." And the law of limitations did not stop there, but contracted yet again the stream of even physical filiation:

Ver. 10. Nor only so, but Rebecca too—being with child, with twin children, of one husband—no problem of complex parentage, as with Abraham, occurring here —even of Isaac our father, just named as the selected heir—(for it was while they were not yet born, while they

had not yet shewn any conduct (*πραξάντων τι*) good or
Ver. 11. bad, that the choice-wise purpose of God might
remain, sole and sovereign, not based on works,
but wholly on the Caller)—it was said to her
Ver. 12. (Gen. xxv. 23), "The greater shall be bond-
man to the less." As it stands written, in the prophet's
message a millennium later, "Jacob I loved, but Esau
I hated,"* I repudiated him as heir.

So the limit has run always along with the promise. Ishmael is Abraham's son, yet not his son. Esau is Isaac's son, yet not his son. And though we trace in Ishmael and in Esau, as they grow, characteristics which may seem to explain the limitation, this will not really do. For the chosen one in each case has his conspicuous unfavourable characteristics too. And the whole tone of the record (not to speak of this its apostolic interpretation) looks towards mystery, not explanation. Esau's "profanity" was the concurrent occasion, not the cause, of the choice of Jacob. The reason of the choice lay in the depths of God, that World "dark with excess of bright." All is well there, but not the less all is unknown.

So we are led up to the shut door of the sanctuary of God's Choice. Touch it; it is adamantine, and it is fast locked. No blind Destiny has turned the key, and lost it. No inaccessible Tyrant sits within, playing to himself both sides of a game of fate, and indifferent to the cry of the soul. The Key-Bearer, whose Name is engraved on the portal, is "He that liveth, and was

* Mal. i. 2, 3.—It is plain that "*hatred*" in such a connexion (and cp. Matt. vi. 24, Luke xiv. 26) need mean no more than relative repudiation. No personal animosity is in question, but a decisive rejection of a rival claim. See Grimm's *N. T. Lexicon* (Thayer), *s.v.* *μισεῖν*.

dead, and is alive for evermore" (Rev. i. 18). And if you listen you will hear words within, like the soft deep voice of many waters, yet of an eternal Heart; "*I am that I am; I will that I will; trust Me.*" But the door *is* locked; and the Voice *is* mystery.

Ah, what agonies have been felt in human souls, as men have looked at that gate, and pondered the unknown interior! The Eternal knows, with infinite kindness and sympathy, the pain unspeakable which can beset the creature when it wrestles with His Eternity, and tries to clasp it with both hands, and to say that "that is all!" We do not find in Scripture, surely, anything like an anathema for that awful sense of the unknown which can gather on the soul drawn—irresistibly as it sometimes seems to be—into the problems of the Choice of God, and oppressed as with "the weight of all the seas upon it," by the very questions stated presently here by the Apostle. The Lord knoweth, not only His will, but our heart, in these matters. And where He entirely declines to explain (surely because we are not yet of age to understand Him if He did) He yet shews us JESUS, and bids us meet the silence of the mystery with the silence of a personal trust in the personal Character revealed in Him.

In something of such stillness shall we approach the paragraph now to follow? Shall we listen, not to explain away, not even over much to explain, but to submit, with a submission which is not a suppressed resentment but an entire reliance? We shall find that the whole matter, in its practical aspect, has a voice articulate enough for the soul which sees Christ, and believes on Him. It says to that soul, "Who maketh thee to differ? Who hath fashioned thee to honour?

Why art thou not now, as once, guiltily rejecting Christ, or, what is the same, postponing Him? Thank HIM who has 'compelled thee,' yet without violation of thyself, 'to come in.' See in thy choice of Him His mercy on thee. And now, fall at His feet, to bless Him, to serve Him, and to trust Him. Think ill of thyself. Think reverently of others. And remember (the Infinite, who has chosen thee, says it), He willeth not the death of a sinner, He loved the world, He bids thee to tell it that He loves it, to tell it that He is Love."

Now we listen. With a look which speaks awe, but not misgiving, disclosing past tempests of doubt, but now a rest of faith, the Apostle dictates again:

Ver. 14. What therefore shall we say? Is there injustice at God's bar (*παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ*)? Away with the thought. The thing is, in the deepest sense, unthinkable. God, the God of Revelation, the God of Christ, is a Being who, if unjust—*ceases to be*, "denies *Himself*." But the thought that His reasons for some given action should be, at least to us now, absolute mystery, He being the Infinite Personality, is not unthinkable at all. And in such a case it is not unreasonable, but the deepest reason, to ask for no more than His articulate guarantee, so to speak, that the mystery is fact; that He is conscious of it, alive to it (speaking humanly); and that He avows it as His will. For when GOD, the God of Christ, bids us "take His will for it," it is a different thing from an attempt, however powerful, to frighten us into silence. It is a reminder WHO He is who speaks; the Being who is kindred to us, who is in relations with us, who loved us, but who also has absolutely made us, and cannot (because we are sheer products of His will) make us so much His equals as to tell us all. So the Apostle proceeds with a "*for*" whose

bearing we have thus already indicated: **For to Moses**
Ver. 15. **he says** (Exod. xxxiv. 19), in the dark sanctuary of Sinai, "**I shall pity whomsoever I do pity, and compassionate whomsoever I do compassionate**"; My account of My saving action shall stop there. **It**
Ver. 16. **appears** (ἄρα) **therefore that it,** the ultimate account of salvation, is not of (as the effect is "*of*" the first cause) **the willer,** nor of the runner, the
Ver. 17. carrier of willing into work, **but of the Pitier—God. For the Scripture** * says (Exod. x. 16) **to Pharaoh,** that large example of defiant human sin, real and guilty, but also, concurrently, of the sovereign Choice which sentenced him to go his own way, and used him as a beacon at its end, "**For this very purpose I raised thee up,** made thee stand, even beneath the Plagues, **that I might display in thee My power, and that My Name,** as of the just God who strikes down the proud, **might be told far and wide** (διαγγελῇ) **in all the earth.**"

Pharaoh's was a case of concurrent phenomena. *A man* was there on the one hand, willingly, deliberately, and most guiltily, battling with right, and rightly bringing ruin on his own head, wholly of himself. *God* was there on the other hand, making that man a monument not of grace but of judgment. And that side, that line, is isolated here, and treated as if it were all.

Ver. 18. **It** appears then that whom He pleases, He pities, and whom He pleases, He hardens, in that sense in which He "hardened Pharaoh's heart," "made it stiff" (חזק), "made it heavy" (כבד), "made it harsh" (קשׁה)—**by sentencing it to have its own**

* Observe the vital personality of the phrase; "*the Scripture speaks.*" **Cp. Gal. iii. 8 for perhaps the strongest example of the kind.**

way. Yes,* thus "*it appears.*" And beyond that inference we can take no step of thought but this—that the Subject of that mysterious "*will*," He who thus "*pleases*," and "*pities*," and "*hardens*," is no other than the God of Jesus Christ. He may be, not only submitted to, but trusted, in that unknowable sovereignty of His will. Yet listen to the question which speaks out the problem of all hearts: **You will say to**
Ver. 19. **me therefore, Why does He still,** after such an avowal of His sovereignty, softening this heart, hardening that, why does He still **find fault? Ah why? For His act of will who has withstood?** (Nay, you have withstood His will, and so have I. Not one word of the argument has contradicted the primary fact of our will, nor therefore our responsibility. But this he does not bring in here.) Nay rather, rather than take
Ver. 20. such an attitude of narrow and helpless logic, think deeper; **Nay rather, O man, O** mere human being (ὦ ἄνθρωπε), **you**—who are you, who are answering back **to your** (τῷ) **God? Shall the thing formed say to its Former, Why did you make me like this? Has**
Ver. 21. **not the potter authority over his** (τοῦ) clay, **out of the same kneaded mass to make this vessel for honour but that for dishonour? But if God, being**
Ver. 22. **pleased to demonstrate His** (τὴν) **wrath, and to evidence what He can do**—*what* will St Paul go on to say? That the Eternal, being thus "pleased," created responsible beings on purpose to destroy them, gave them personality, and then compelled them to transgress? No, he does not say so. The sternly simple illustration, in itself one of the least relieved utterances in the whole Scripture—that dread Potter and his kneaded Clay!—

* Cp. Psal. lxxxi. 12, and above, i. 24, 26.

gives way, in its application, to a statement of the work of God on man full of significance in its variation. Here are indeed the "*vessels*" still; and the vessels "*for honour*" are such because of "*mercy*," and His own hand has "*prepared them for glory*." And there are the vessels "*for dishonour*," and in a sense of awful mystery they are such because of "*wrath*." But the "*wrath*" of the Holy One can fall only upon demerit; so these "*vessels*" have merited His displeasure of themselves. And they are "*prepared for ruin*"; but where is any mention of *His* hand preparing them? And meanwhile He "*bears them in much longsuffering*." The mystery is there, impenetrable as ever, when we try to pierce behind "His will." But on every side it is limited and qualified by facts which witness to the compassions of the Infinite Sovereign even in His judgments, and remind us that sin is altogether "of" the creature. So we take up the words where we dropped them above: **What if He bore, (the tense throws us forward into eternity, to look back thence on His ways in time,) in much longsuffering, vessels of**

Ver. 23. **wrath, adjusted for ruin? And acted otherwise with others, that He might evidence the wealth of His glory, the resources of His inmost Character, poured upon vessels of pity, which He prepared in advance for glory, by the processes of justifying and hallowing grace—whom in fact (καὶ) He called, effectually,**

Ver. 24. **in their conversion, even us, not only from the Jews, but also from the Gentiles?** For while the lineal Israel, with its privilege and its apparent failure, is here first in view, there lies behind it the phenomenon of "the Israel of God," the heaven-born heirs of the Fathers, a race not of blood but of the Spirit. The great Promise, all the while, had set towards *that* Israel

as its final scope; and now he gives proof from the Prophets that this intention was at least half revealed all along the line of revelation.

Ver. 25. As actually (καὶ) in our (τῷ) Hosea (ii. 23, Heb., 25) in the book we know as such, He says, "I will call what was not My people, My people; Ver. 26. and the not-beloved one, beloved.* And (another Hosean oracle,† in line with the first) it shall be, in the place where it was said to them, Not My people are ye, there they shall be called sons of the living God." In both places the first incidence of the words is on the restoration of the Ten Tribes to covenant blessings. But the Apostle, in the Spirit, sees an ultimate and satisfying reference to a vaster application of the same principle; the bringing of the rebelling and banished ones of all mankind into covenant and blessing.

Meanwhile the Prophets who foretell that great in-gathering indicate with equal solemnity the spiritual failure of all but a fraction of the lineal heirs of promise.

Ver. 27. But Isaiah cries over‡ Israel, "If the number of the sons of Israel should be as the sand of the sea, Ver. 28. the remnant only shall be saved; for as one who completes and cuts short will the Lord do His work (λόγον, דבר) upon the earth." § Here again is a first and second incidence of the prophecy. In every stage

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* In the Hebrew, literally, "*I will pity the not-pitied one*" (feminine, of the idealized people or church; so in the Greek here, ἠγαπημένην). Divine "*pity*" is more than "akin to" divine "*love*."

† i. 10 (Hebrew, ii. 1).

‡ Ὑπέρ: with the thought of a *lament over* the ruined ones. The preposition appears here in its original and literal meaning.

§ Isa. x. 22, 23: perhaps with an insertion of the phrase, "*the number of*," from Hos. i. 10. As to wording, he quotes freely from the Hebrew, more nearly from the Lxx. But the substance is identical

of the history of Sin and Redemption the Apostle, in the Spirit, sees an embryo of the great Development. So, in the wofully limited numbers of the Exiles who returned from the old captivity he sees an embodied prophecy of the fewness of the sons of Israel who shall return from the exile of incredulity to their true Messiah. And as Isaiah (i. 9) has foretold (προείρηκεν), so it is; "Unless the Lord of Hosts (Σαβαώθ, צבאות) had left us a seed,* like Sodom we had become, and to Gomorrah we had been resembled."

Ver. 29.

Such was the mystery of the facts, alike in the older and in the later story of Israel. A remnant, still a remnant, not the masses, entered upon an inheritance of such ample provision, and so sincerely offered. And behind this lay the insoluble shadow within which is concealed the relation of the Infinite Will to the wills of men. But also, in front of the phenomenon, concealed by no shadow save that which is cast by human sin, the Apostle sees and records the reasons, as they reside in the human will, of this "salvation of a remnant." The promises of God, all along, and supremely now in Christ, had been conditioned (it was in the nature of spiritual things that it should be so) by submission to His way of fulfilment. The golden gift was there, in the most generous of hands, stretched out to give. But it could be put only into a recipient hand open and empty. It could be taken only by submissive and self-forgetting faith. And man, in his fall, had twisted his will out of gear for such an action. Was it wonderful that, by his

as compared with both. Following considerable documentary evidence, we omit here the Greek words represented by "*in righteousness; because a short work.*"

* The equivalent of the LXX. for the "very small *remnant*" (שׁוֹרֵד) of the Hebrew.

own fault, he failed to receive? What therefore shall
Ver. 30. we say?* Why, that the Gentiles, though they did not (τὰ μὴ) pursue righteousness, though no Oracle had set them on the track of a true divine acceptance and salvation, achieved righteousness, grasped
Ver. 31. it when once revealed, but† the righteousness that results on faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, aiming at what is, for fallen man, the impossible goal, a perfect meeting of the Law's one principle of acceptance, "This do and thou shalt live," did not attain that law‡; that is to say, practically, as we now review their story of vain efforts in the line of self, did not attain the acceptance to which that law was to be the avenue. The Pharisee as such, the Pharisee Saul of Tarsus for example, neither had peace with God, nor dared to think he had, in the depth of his soul. He knew enough of the divine ideal to be hopelessly uneasy about his realization of it. He could say, stiffly enough, "*God, I thank Thee*" (Luke xviii. 11, 14); but he "went down to his house" unhappy, unsatisfied, unjustified. On what
Ver. 32. account? Because it was not of faith, but as of works§; in the unquiet dream that man must, and could, work up the score of merit to a valid
Ver. 33. claim. They stumbled‖ on the Stone of their (τοῦ) stumbling; as it stands written (Isai. viii. 14, xxviii. 16), in a passage where the great perpetual Promise is in view, and where the blind people are

* For the seventh and last time he uses this characteristic phrase.

† Δέ: in slightly suggested contrast to the ideal of the Jew, a *merited* acceptance.

‡ Omit here the word δικαιοσύνης.

§ Omit τοῦ νόμου.

‖ Omit γάρ.

seen rejecting it as their foothold in favour of policy, or of formalism, Behold, I place in Sion, in the very centre of light and privilege, a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of upsetting; and he who * confides in Him, (or, perhaps, in it,) he who rests on it, on Him (ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ), shall not be put to shame.

One great Rabbi at least, Rashi, of the twelfth century, bears witness to the mind of the Jewish Church upon the significance of that mystic Rock. "Behold," so runs his interpretation, "I have established a King, Messiah, who shall be in Zion a stone of proving."

Was ever prophecy more profoundly verified in event? Not for the lineal Israel only, but for Man, the King Messiah is, as ever, the Stone of either stumbling or foundation. He is, as ever, "a Sign spoken against." He is, as ever, the Rock of Ages, where the believing sinner hides, and rests, and builds,

> "Below the storm-mark of the sky,
> Above the flood-mark of the deep."

Have we known what it is to stumble over Him? "We will not have this Man to reign over us"; "We were never in bondage to any man; who is He that He should set us free?" And are we now lifted by a Hand of omnipotent kindness to a place deep in His clefts, safe on His summit, "knowing nothing" for the peace of conscience, the satisfaction of thought, the liberation of the will, the abolition of death, "but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"? Then let us think with always humbled sympathy of those who, for whatever reason, still "forsake their own mercy" (Jonah ii. 8). And let us inform them where we are, and how we

* Omit πᾶς.

are here, and that "the ground is good." And for ourselves, that we may do this the better, let us often read again the simple, strong assurance which closes this chapter of mysteries; "*He who confides in Him shall not be put to shame*"; "*shall not be disappointed*"; "*shall not*," in the vivid phrase of the Hebrew itself, "*make haste.*" No, we shall not "make haste." From that safe Place no hurried retreat shall ever need to be beaten. That Fortress cannot be stormed; it cannot be surprised; it cannot crumble. For "IT is HE"; the Son, the Lamb, of God; the sinner's everlasting Righteousness, the believer's unfailing Source of peace, of purity, and of power.

Detached Note to IX. 5.

The following is transcribed, with a few modifications, from the writer's Commentary on the Epistle in *The Cambridge Bible:*

["*Who is over all, God blessed for ever.*] The Greek may, with more or less facility, be translated (1) as in A.V.; or (2) 'who is God over all,' etc.; or (3) 'blessed for ever be He who is God over all' (*i.e.*, the Eternal Father). . . . If we adopt (3) we take the Apostle to be led, by the mention of the Incarnation, to utter a sudden and solemn doxology to the God who gave that crowning mercy. In favour of this it is urged (by some entirely orthodox commentators, as H. A. W. Meyer) that St Paul nowhere else styles the Lord simply 'God,' but rather 'the Son of God,' etc. By this they do not mean to detract from the Lord's Deity; but they maintain that St Paul always so states that Deity, under divine guidance, as to mark the 'Subordination of the Son'—that Subordination which is not a difference of Nature, Power, or Eternity, but of Order; just such as is marked by the simple but profound words Father and Son.

"But on the other hand there is Tit. ii. 13, where the Greek is (at least) *perfectly capable* of the rendering, 'our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.' [There is Acts xx. 28, where the evidence is very strong for the reading, retained by the R.V. (text), '*the Church of God*, which He purchased with His own blood.' And

if St John is to be taken to report words exactly, in his narrative of the Resurrection, in an incident whose point is deeply connected with verbal precision, we have one of the first Apostles, within eight days of the Resurrection, addressing the Risen Lord (John xx. 28) as '*my God*.' (We call attention to this as against the contention that only the latest developments of inspiration, represented in *e.g.* St John's Preamble to his Gospel, shew us Christ called explicitly God.)]

"If . . . it is divinely true that 'the WORD IS GOD,' it is surely far from wonderful if here and there, in peculiar connexions, [St Paul] should so speak of Christ, even though guided to keep another phase of the truth *habitually* in view.

"Now, beyond all fair question, the Greek here is quite naturally rendered as in the A.V.; had it not been for historical controversy, probably, no other rendering would have been suggested. And lastly, and what is important, the context far rather suggests *a lament* (over the fall of Israel) than an ascription of praise. And what is most significant of all, it pointedly suggests *some explicit allusion to the super*-human Nature of Christ, by the words '*according to the flesh*.' But if there is such an allusion, then it must lie in the words, '*over all, God*.'"

It may be interesting to add the following note from Franz Delitzsch (*Brief an die Römer in das Hebräische übersetzt und aus Talmud und Midrasch erläutert*, Leipzig, 1870, p. 89):

"*Christus, nach dem Fleisch, welcher ist Gott über alles, hochgelobet in Ewigkeit.* Deshalb nämlich weil er Gott und Mensch in Einer Person ist. Er ist der andere David (דוד אחר), und ist Jahve unsere Gerechtigkeit

(יהוה צדקנו, Jer. xxiii. 6). Auch der Midrasch *Mischle* zu Spr. xix. 21 zählt ה׳ צדקנו neben דוד unter den Messiasnamen auf, und auch anderwärts bezeugen Talmud und Midrasch, dass der Messias יהוה heisst; denn 'Gott war in Christo und versöhnte die Welt mit ihm selber.' Paulus sagt in Grunde nichts anderes als was Jesaia ix. 5, wo die Zunz'sche Bibelübersetzung, der exegetischen Wahrheit die Ehre gebend, übersetzt: 'Man nennt seinen Namen: Wunder, Berather, starker Gott, ewiger Vater, Fürst des Friedens.' Der Messias ist und heisst אל גבור und אבי־עד, also obwohl nicht האלהים, doch אלהים (אל) לעולמים."

Delitzsch renders the close of ix. 5 thus:

וְאֲשֶׁר מֵהֶם יָצָא הַמָּשִׁיחַ לְפִי בְשָׂרוֹ אֲשֶׁר חוּא עַל־הַכֹּל
מְבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָמִים אָמֵן׃

CHAPTER XXI

JEWISH UNBELIEF AND GENTILE FAITH: PROPHECY

ROMANS X. 1-21

THE problem of Israel is still upon the Apostle's soul. He has explored here and there the conditions of the fact that his brethren, as a mass, have rejected Jesus. He has delivered his heart of its loving human groan over the fact. He has reminded himself, and then his readers, that the fact however involves no failure of the purpose and promise of God; for God from the first had indicated limitations within the apparent scope of the Abrahamic Promise. He has looked in the face, once for all, the mystery of the relation between God's efficient will and the will of the creature, finding a refuge, under the moral strain of that mystery, not away from it but as it were behind it, in the recollection of the infinite trustworthiness, as well as eternal rights, of man's MAKER. Then he has recurred to the underlying main theme of the whole Epistle, the acceptance of the sinner in God's own one way; and we have seen how, from Israel's own point of view, Israel has stumbled and fallen just by his own fault. Israel would not rest upon "the Stone of stumbling"; he would collide with it. Divine sovereignty here or there—the heart of Jewish man, in its responsible personality, and wholly of itself, rebelled

against a man-humbling salvation. And so all its religiousness, its earnestness, its intensity, went for nothing in the quest for peace and purity. They stumbled—a real striking of real wayward feet—at the Stumbling Stone; which all the while lay ready to be their basis and repose.

He cannot leave the subject, with its sadness, its lessons, and its hope. He must say more of his love and longing for Israel; and also more about this aspect of Israel's fall—this collision of man's will with the Lord's Way of Peace. And he will unfold the deep witness of the prophecies to the nature of that Way, and to the reluctance of the Jewish heart to accept it. Moses shall come in with the Law, and Isaiah with the Scriptures of the Prophets; and we shall see how their Inspirer, all along from the first, indicated what should surely happen when a salvation altogether divine should be presented to hearts filled with themselves.

Ver. 1. Brethren, he begins, the deliberate desire (*εὐδοκία*) of my heart, whatever discouragements may oppose it,* and my petition unto God for them,† is salvationwards. He is inevitably moved to this by the pathetic sight of their earnestness, misguided indeed, guiltily misguided, utterly inadequate to constitute for them even a phantom of merit; yet, to the eyes that watch it, a different thing from indifference or hypocrisy. He cannot see their real struggles, and not long that they may reach the shore.

Ver. 2. For I bear them witness, the witness of one who once was the type of the class, that they have zeal of God, an honest jealousy for His Name, His

* We thus attempt to convey the force of *μέν*.

† So read; not "*for Israel.*"

Word, His Worship, only not in the line of spiritual knowledge (κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν). They have not seen all He is, all His Word means, all His worship implies. They are sure, and rightly sure, of many things about Him; but they have not "seen HIM." And so they have not "abhorred themselves" (Job xli. 5, 6). And thus they are *not*, in their own conviction, shut up to a salvation which must be altogether of Him; which is no contract with Him, but eternal bounty from Him.

Solemn and heart-moving scene! There are now, and were then, those who would have surveyed it, and come away with the comfortable reflection that so much earnestness would surely somehow work itself right at last; nay, that it was already sufficiently good in itself to secure these honest zealots a place in some comprehensive heaven. If ever such thoughts had excuse, surely it was here. The "*zeal*" was quite sincere. It was ready to suffer, as well as to strike. The zealot was not afraid of a world in arms. And he felt himself on fire not for evil, but for God, for the God of Abraham, of Moses, of the Prophets, of the Promise. Would not this do? Would not the lamentable rejection of Jesus which attended it be condoned as a tremendous but mere accident, while the "*zeal of God*" remained as the substance, the essence, of the spiritual state of the zealot? Surely a very large allowance would be made; to put it at the lowest terms.

Yet such was not the view of St Paul, himself once the most honest and disinterested Jewish zealot in the world. He had seen THE LORD. And so he had seen himself. The deadly mixture of motive which may underlie what nevertheless we may have to call an *honest* hatred of the Gospel had been shewn to him in the white light of Christ. In that light he had seen—

what it alone can fully shew—the condemnableness of all sin, and the hopelessness of self-salvation. From himself he reasons, and rightly, to his brethren. He knows, with a solemn sympathy, how much they are in earnest. But his sympathy conceals no false liberalism; it is not cheaply generous of the claims of God. He does not think that because they are in earnest they are saved. Their earnestness drives his heart to a deeper prayer for their salvation.

Ver. 3. **For knowing not the righteousness of our** (τοῦ) **God**, His way of being just, yet the Justifier, **and seeking to set up their own righteousness**, to construct for themselves a claim which should "stand in judgment," **they did not submit to the righteousness of our** (τοῦ) **God**, when it apppeared before them, embodied in "the Lord our Righteousness." They *aspired* to acceptance. God bade them *submit* to it. In their view, it was a matter of attainment; an ascent to a difficult height, where the climber might exult in his success. As He presented it, it was a matter of surrender, as when a patient, given over, places himself helpless in a master-healer's hands, for a recovery which is to be due to those hands alone, and to be celebrated only to their praise.*

Alas for such "ignorance" in these earnest souls; for such a failure in Israel to strike the true line of "knowledge"! For it was a guilty failure. The Law had been indicating all the while that their Dispensation was not its own end, but one vast complex means to shut man up to a Redeemer who was at once to satisfy

* Cp. 1 Pet. i. 2; *εἰς ὑπακοὴν . . . Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*; an "*obedience*" which means the decisive *submission* of the sinner to the Saviour's *method of mercy*.

every type, and every oracle, and to supply "the impossible of the Law" (viii. 3), by giving Himself to be the believer's vicarious Merit. **For the Law's**
Ver. 4. **end**, its Goal, its Final Cause in the plan of redemption, **is**—Christ, unto righteousness, to effect and secure this wonderful acceptance, **for every one who believes.** Yes, He is no arbitrary sequel to the Law; He stands organically related to it. And to this the Law itself is witness, both by presenting an inexorable and condemning standard as its only possible code of acceptance, and by mysteriously pointing the soul away from that code, in its quest for mercy, to something altogether different, at once accessible and divine. **For**
Ver. 5. **Moses writes down** (γράφει) thus **the righteousness got from the Law, "The man who does* them, shall live in it"** † (Levit. xviii. 5); it is a matter of personal action and personal meriting alone. Thus the code, feasible and beneficent indeed on the plane of national and social life, which is its lower field of action, is necessarily fatal to fallen man when the question lies between his conscience and the eternal
Ver. 6. Judge. **But the righteousness got from faith,** the acceptance received by surrendering trust, **thus speaks** (Deut. xxx. 12-14)—in Moses' words indeed, (and this is one main point in the reasoning, that *he* is witness,) yet as it were with a personal voice of its own, deep and tender; **"Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend to the heaven?" that is, to bring down Christ,** by
Ver. 7. human efforts, by a climbing merit; **"or, Who shall descend into the abyss? that is, to bring up**

* Ὁ ποιήσας: the aorist sums up acts into a single idea of action.

† Ἐν αὐτῇ: "*in the righteousness*"; such seems to be the true reading. To "*live in*" a righteousness is to live as it were surrounded, guaranteed, by it.

Christ from the dead," as if His victorious Sacrifice needed your supplement in order to its resurrection-triumph.

Ver. 8. But what does it say? "Near thee is the utterance, the explicit account of the Lord's willingness to bless the soul which casts itself on Him,* in thy mouth, to recite it, and in thy heart," to welcome it. And this message is the utterance of faith, the

Ver. 9. creed of acceptance by faith alone, which we proclaim; that if you shall confess in your mouth Jesus as Lord,† as divine King and Master, and shall believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, owning in the soul the glory of the Resurrection, as revealing and sealing the triumph of the Atonement,

Ver. 10. you shall be saved. For with the heart faith is exercised, unto righteousness, with acceptance for its resultant; while (δὲ) with the mouth confession is made, unto salvation, with present deliverance and final glory for its resultant, the moral sequel of a life which

Ver. 11. owns its Lord as all in all. For the Scripture says (Isai. xxviii. 16), "Everyone who believes on Him shall not be ashamed,"‡ shall never be disappointed; shall be "kept, through faith, unto the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. i. 5).

We have traversed here a tract pregnant of questions and mystery. We have to remember here also, as in previous places, that the Scripture is "not a sun, but a lamp." Much, very much, which this passage suggests as problem finds in its words no answer. This citation

* Observe that the context in Deut. xxx. is full of the thought that rebels and law-breakers shall be welcome back when they come penitent to their God, "without one plea," but taking Him at His word.

† Or, with an alternative reading, "*that Jesus is Lord.*"

‡ See above, ix. 33.

from Deuteronomy, with its vision of ascents and descents, its thoughts of the heaven and the abyss, what did it mean when aged Moses spoke it in the plains of Moab? What did it mean *to him?* Did he see, did he feel, Messiah in every clause? Had he conscious foreviews, then and there, of what was to be done ages later beyond that stern ridge of hills, westward of "the narrow stream"? Did he knowingly "testify beforehand" that God was to be born Man at Bethlehem, and to die Man at Jerusalem? We do not know; we cannot possibly know, until the eternal day finds Moses and ourselves together in the City of God, and we better understand the mysterious Word, at last, in that great light. If our Master's utterances are to be taken as final, it is quite certain that "Moses wrote of Him" (John v. 46). But it is not certain that he always knew he was so writing when he so wrote; nor is it certain *how far* his consciousness went when it was most awake that way. In the passage here cited by St Paul the great Prophet may have been aware only of a reference of his words to the seen, the temporal, the national, to the blessings of loyalty to Israel's God-given polity, and of a return to it after times of revolt and decline. But then, St Paul neither affirms this nor denies it. As if on purpose, he almost drops the personality of Moses out of sight, and personifies Justification as the speaker. His concern is less with the Prophet than with his Inspirer, the ultimate Author behind the immediate author. And his own prophet-insight is guided to see that in the thought of *that* Author, as He wielded Moses' mind and diction at His will, CHRIST was the inmost purport of the words.

We may ask again what are the laws by which the Apostle modifies here the Prophet's phrases. "*Who*

shall descend into the abyss? The Hebrew reads, "*Who shall go over* (or *on*) *the sea?*" The Septuagint reads, "*Who shall go to the other side of the sea?*" Here too "we know in part." Assuredly the change of terms was neither unconsciously made, nor arbitrarily; and it was made for readers who could challenge it, if so it seemed to them to be done. But we should need to know the whole relation of the One inspiring Master to the minds of both His Prophet and His Apostle to answer the question completely. However, we can see that Prophet and Apostle both have in their thought here the antithesis of depth to height; that the sea is, to Moses here, the antithesis to the sky, not to the land; and that St Paul intensifies the imagery in its true direction accordingly when he writes, "*into the abyss.*"

Again, he finds Justification by Faith in the Prophet's oracle about the subjective "*nearness*" of "*the utterance*" of mercy. Once more we own our ignorance of the conscious purport of the words, as Moses' words. We shall quite decline, if we are reverently cautious, to say that for certain Moses was not aware of such an inmost reference in what he said; it is very much easier to assert than to know what the limitations of the consciousness of the Prophets were. But here also we rest in the fact that behind both Moses and Paul, in their free and mighty personalities, stood their one Lord, building His Scripture slowly into its manifold oneness through them both. He was in the thought and word of Moses; and meantime already to Him the thought and word of Paul was present, and was in His plan. And the earlier utterance had this at least to do with the later, that it drew the mind of the pondering and worshipping Israel to the idea of a contact with God in His Promises which was not external and

mechanical but deep within the individual himself, and manifested in the individual's free and living avowal of it.

As we quit the passage, let us mark and cherish its insistence upon "*confession*," "*confession with the mouth that Jesus is Lord.*" This specially he connects with "*salvation*," with the believer's preservation to eternal glory. "*Faith*" is "*unto righteousness*"; "*confession*" is "*unto salvation.*" Why is this? Is faith after all not enough for our union with the Lord, and for our safety in Him? Must we bring in something else, to be a more or less meritorious makeweight in the scale? If this is what he means, he is gainsaying the whole argument of the Epistle on its main theme. No; it is eternally true that we are justified, that we are accepted, that we are incorporated, that we are kept, through faith only; that is, that Christ is all for all things in our salvation, and our part and work in the matter is to receive and hold Him in *an empty* hand. But then this empty hand, holding Him, receives life and power from Him. The man is vivified by his Rescuer. He is rescued that he may live, and that he may serve as living. He cannot truly serve without loyalty to his Lord. He cannot be truly loyal while he hides his relation to Him. In some articulate way he must "*confess Him*"; or he is not treading the path where the Shepherd walks before the sheep.

The "*confession with the mouth*" here in view is, surely, nothing less than the believer's open loyalty to Christ. It is no mere recitation of even the sacred catholic Creed; which may be recited as by an automaton. It is the witness of the whole man to Christ, as his own discovered Life and Lord. And thus it means in effect the path of faithfulness along which the

Saviour actually leads to glory those who are justified by faith.

That no slackened emphasis on faith is to be felt here is clear from ver. 11. There, in the summary and close of the passage, nothing but faith is named; "whosoever *believeth on Him*." It is as if he would correct even the slightest disquieting surmise that our repose upon the Lord has to be secured by something other than Himself, through some means more complex than taking Him at His word. Here, as much as anywhere in the Epistle, this is the message; "from faith to faith." The "confession with the mouth" is not a different something added to this faith; it is its issue, its manifestation, its embodiment. "I believed; *therefore have I spoken*" (Psal. cxvi. 10).

This recurrence to his great theme gives the Apostle's thought a direction once again towards the truth of the world-wide scope of the Gospel of Acceptance. In the midst of this *philo-judean* section of the Epistle, on his way to say glorious things about abiding mercy and coming blessing for the Jews, he must pause again to assert the equal welcome of "the Greeks" to the Righteousness of God, and the foreshadow of this welcome in the Prophets.

Ver. 12. **For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek** (wonderful antithesis to the "no distinction" of iii. 23!). **For the same Lord is Lord of all, wealthy to all who call upon Him,** who invoke Him, who appeal to Him, in the name of His own mercies in His redeeming Son. **For** we have the prophecies

Ver. 13. with us here again. Joel, in a passage (ii. 32) full of Messiah, the passage with which the Spirit of Pentecost filled Peter's lips, speaks thus without a limit; "Every one, whoever shall call upon the Lord's Name, shall be saved." As he cites the words, and the

thought rises upon him of this immense welcome to the sinful world, he feels afresh all the need of the heathen, and all the cruel narrowness of the Pharisaism which would shut them out from such an amplitude of blessing.

Ver. 14. **How then can * they call on Him on whom they never † believed? But how can they believe on Him whom they never heard? But how can they hear**

Ver. 15. **Him apart from a proclaimer? But how can they proclaim unless they are sent,** unless the Church which holds the sacred light sends her messengers out into the darkness? And in this again the Prophets are with the Christian Apostle, and against the loveless Judaist: **As it stands written** (Isai. lii. 7), "**How fair the feet of the gospellers of peace, of the gospellers of good!**" ‡

Here, as an incident in this profound discussion, is given for ever to the Church of Christ one of the most distinct and stringent of her missionary "marching-orders." Let us recollect this, and lay it on our own souls, forgetting awhile, for we may, the problem of Israel and the exclusiveness of ancient Pharisaism. What is there here for us? What motive facts are here, ready to energize and direct the will of the Christian, and of the Church, in the matter of the "gospelling" of the world?

We take note first of what is written last, the moral beauty and glory of the enterprise. "*How fair the feet!*" From the view-point of heaven there is nothing on the earth more lovely than the bearing of the name of Jesus Christ into the needing world, when the bearer

* Throughout these questions we read the verbs in the conjunctive

† We thus represent, with hesitation, the aorist tense.

‡ No doubt the immediate reference of Isai. lii. 7 is to good news *for* "Zion" rather than *from* her to the world. But the context is full not only of Messiah but (ver. 15) of "*many nations.*"

is one "who loves and knows." The work may have, and probably will have, very little of the rainbow of romance about it. It will often lead the worker into the most uncouth and forbidding circumstances. It will often demand of him the patient expenditure of days and months upon humiliating and circuitous preparations; as he learns a barbarous unwritten tongue, or a tongue ancient and elaborate, in a stifling climate; or finds that he must build his own hut, and dress his own food, if he is to live at all among "the Gentiles." It may lay on him the exquisite—and prosaic—trial of finding the tribes around him entirely unaware of their need of his message; unconscious of sin, of guilt, of holiness, of God. Nay, they may not only not care for his message; they may suspect or deride his motives, and roundly tell him that he is a political spy, or an adventurer come to make his private gains, or a barbarian tired of his own Thule and irresistibly attracted to the region of the sun. He will often be tempted to think "the journey too great for him," and long to let his tired and heavy feet rest for ever. But his Lord is saying of him, all the while, "How fair the feet!" He is doing a work whose inmost conditions even now are full of moral glory, and whose eternal issues, perhaps where he thinks there has been most failure, shall be, by grace, worthy of "the King in His beauty." It is the continuation of what the King Himself "began to do" (Acts i. 1), when He was His own first Missionary to a world which needed Him immeasurably, yet did not know Him when He came.

Then, this paragraph asserts the necessity of the missionary's work still more urgently than its beauty. True, it suggests many questions (what great Scripture does not do so?) which we cannot answer yet at all:—

"Why has He left the Gentiles thus? Why is so much, for their salvation, suspended (in our view) upon the too precarious and too lingering diligence of the Church? What will the King say at last to those who never could, by the Church's fault, even hear the blessed Name, that they might believe in It, and call upon It?" He knoweth *the whole* answer to such questions; not we. Yet here meanwhile stands out this "thing revealed" (Deut. xxix. 29). In the Lord's normal order, which is for certain the order of eternal spiritual right and love, however little we can see all the conditions of the case, man is to be saved through a personal "calling upon His Name." And for that "calling" there is need of personal believing. And for that believing there is need of personal hearing. And in order to that hearing, God does not speak in articulate thunder from the sky, nor send visible angels up and down the earth, but bids His Church, His children, go and tell.

Nothing can be stronger and surer than the practical logic of this passage. The need of the world, it says to us, is not only amelioration, elevation, evolution. It is salvation. It is pardon, acceptance, holiness, and heaven. It is God; it is Christ. And that need is to be met not by subtle expansions of polity and society. No "unconscious cerebration" of the human race will regenerate fallen man. Nor will his awful wound be healed by any drawing on the shadowy resources of a post-mortal hope. The work is to be done now, in the Name of Jesus Christ, and *by* His Name. And His Name, in order to be known, has to be announced and explained. And that work is to be done by those who already know it, or it will not be done at all. "There is none other Name." There is no other method of evangelization.

Why is not that Name already at least externally known and reverenced in every place of human dwelling? It would have been so, for a long time now, if the Church of Christ had followed better the precept and also the example of St Paul. Had the apostolic missions been sustained more adequately throughout Christian history, and had the apostolic Gospel been better maintained in the Church in all the energy of its divine simplicity and fulness, the globe would have been covered—not indeed in a hurry, yet ages ago now—with the knowledge of Jesus Christ as Fact, as Truth, as Life. We are told even now by some of the best informed advocates of missionary enterprise that if Protestant Christendom (to speak of it alone) were really to respond to the missionary call, and "send" its messengers out not by tens but by thousands (no chimerical number), it would be soberly possible within thirty years so to distribute the message that no given inhabited spot should be, at furthest, one day's walk from a centre of evangelization. This programme is not fanaticism, surely. It is a proposal for possible action, too long deferred, in the line of St Paul's precept and example. It is not meant to discredit any present form of well-considered operation. And it does not for a moment ignore the futility of all enterprise where the sovereign power of the Eternal Spirit is not present. Nor does it forget the permanent call to the Church to sustain amply the pastoral work at home, in "the flock of God which is *among us*" (1 Pet. v. 2). But it sees and emphasizes the fact that the Lord has laid it upon His Church to be His messenger to the whole world, and to be in holy earnest about it, and that the work, as to its human side, is quite feasible to a Church awake. "Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the wills of Thy faithful

people," to both the glory and the necessity of this labour of labours for Thee, "that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of it, may of Thee be plenteously rewarded," in Thy divine use of their obedience, for the salvation of the world.

But the great Missionary anticipates an objection from facts to his burning plea for the rightness of an unrestrained evangelism. The proclamation might be universal; but were not the results partial? "Here a little, and there a little"; was not this the story of missionary results even when a Paul, a Barnabas, a Peter, was the missionary? Everywhere some faith; but everywhere more hostility, and still more indifference! Could this, after all, be the main track of the divine purposes—these often ineffectual excursions of the "fair feet" of the messengers of an eternal peace? Ah, that objection must have offered no mere logical difficulty to St Paul; it must have pierced his heart. For while His Master was his first motive, his fellow-men themselves were his second. He loved their souls; he longed to see them blessed in Christ, saved in Him from "the death that cannot die," filled in Him with "life indeed" (ἡ ὄντως ζωή, 1 Tim. vi. 19). The man who shed tears over his converts as he warned them (Acts xx. 31) had tears also, we may be sure, for those who would not be converted; nay, we know he had: "I tell you, *even weeping* (καὶ κλαίων), that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ" (Phil. iii. 18). But here too he leans back on the solemn comfort, the answer from within a veil,—that Prophecy had taken account of this beforehand. Moses, and Isaiah, and David, had foretold on the one hand a universal message of good, but on the other hand a sorrowfully limited response from man, and notably

from Israel. So he proceeds: **But not all obeyed** * **the good tidings**, when "the word" reached them; **for**—we were prepared for such a mystery, such a grief—**for Isaiah says** (liii. 1), in his great Oracle of the Crucified, "**Lord, who believed our hearing**" (*ἀκοὴ*), the message they heard of us, about One "on whom were laid the iniquities of us all"? And as he dictates that word "*hearing*," it emphasizes to him the fact that not mystic intuitions born out of the depths of man are the means of revelation, but articulate messages given from the depths of God, and spoken by men to men. And he throws the thought into a brief sentence, such as would lie in a footnote in a modern book: **So we gather** (*ἄρα*) **that faith comes from hearing; but the hearing comes through Christ's** † **utterance** (*ῥῆμα*); the messenger has it because it was first given to him by the Master who proclaimed HIMSELF the Way, Truth, Life, Light, Bread, Shepherd, Ransom, Lord. All is revelation, not reverie; utterance, not insight.

Ver. 16.

Ver. 17.

Then the swift thought turns, and returns again. The prophecies *have* foretold an evangelical utterance to the whole human world. Not only in explicit prediction do they do so, but in the "mystic glory" of their more remote allusions. **But I say, Did they not hear?** Was this failure of belief due to a limitation of the messenger's range in the plan of God? Nay, rather, "**Unto all the earth went out their tone, and to the ends of man's world** (*ἡ οἰκουμένη*) **their utterances**" (Psal. xix. 4). The words are the voice of that Psalm where

Ver. 18.

* The aorist gathers up the history of evangelization into a point of thought.

† Read **Χριστοῦ**, probably.

the glories of the visible heavens are collocated with the glories of the Word of God. The Apostle hears more than Nature in the Sunrise Hymn of David; he hears grace and the Gospel in the deep harmony which carries the immortal melody along. The God who meant the skies, with their "silent voices," to preach a Creator not to one race but to all, meant also His Word to have no narrower scope, preaching a Redeemer. Yes, and there were articulate predictions that it should be so, as well as starry parables; predictions too that shewed the prospect not only of a world evangelized, but of an Israel put to shame by the faith of pagans. **But I say** (his rapid phrase meets with an anticipating answer the cavil yet unspoken) **did not Israel know?** Had they no distinct forewarning of what we see to-day? **First comes Moses, saying,*** in his prophetic Song, sung at the foot of Pisgah (Deut. xxxii. 21), "I—the '*I*' is emphatic; the Person is THE LORD, and the action shall be nothing less than His—**I will take a no-nation to† move your jealousy; to move your anger I will take a nation non-intelligent**"; a race not only not informed by a previous revelation, but not trained by thought upon it to an insight into new truth. And what Moses indicates, Isaiah, standing later in the history, indignantly explains: **But Isaiah dares anything** (ἀποτολμᾷ), **and says** (lxv. 1), "**I was found by those who sought not Me; manifest I became to those who consulted not Me.**"‡ **But as to Israel he says,**

Ver. 19.

Ver. 20.

Ver. 21.

* So we paraphrase πρῶτος (not πρῶτον) Μωϋσῆς λέγει.

† So we attempt to give the force of ἐπ' οὐκ ἔθνει, ἐπὶ ἔθνει.

‡ Ἐμὲ is emphatic in both clauses. Ἐπερωτᾶν is used of the consultation of an oracle. Our translation thus seems better than the more secondary explanation, "*who sought not to do My will.*"

in the words next in order in the place (lxv. 2), "All the day long I spread my hands open, to beckon and to embrace, towards a people disobeying and contradicting."

So the servant brings his sorrows for consolation to —may we write the words in reverence?—the sorrows of his Master. He mourns over an Athens, an Ephesus, and above all over a Jerusalem, that "will not come to the Son of God, that they might have life" (John v. 40). And his grief is not only inevitable; it is profoundly right, wise, holy. But he need not bear it unrelieved. He grasps the Scripture which tells him that his LORD has called those who would not come, and opened the eternal arms for an embrace—to be met only with a contradiction. He weeps, but it is as on the breast of Jesus as He wept over the City. And in the double certainty that the Lord has felt such grief, and that He is THE LORD, he yields, he rests, he is still. "The King of the Ages" (1 Tim. i. 17) and "the Man of Sorrows" are One. To know Him is to be at peace even under the griefs of the mystery of sin.

CHAPTER XXII

ISRAEL HOWEVER NOT FORSAKEN

ROMANS xi. 1-10

"*A PEOPLE disobeying and contradicting.*" So the Lord of Israel, through the prophet, had described the nation. Let us remember as we pass on what a large feature in the prophecies, and indeed in the whole Old Testament, such accusations and exposures are. From Moses to Malachi, in histories, and songs, and instructions, we find everywhere this tone of stern truth-telling, this unsparing detection and description of Israelite sin. And we reflect that every one of these utterances, humanly speaking, was the voice of an Israelite; and that whatever reception it met with at the moment—it was sometimes a scornful or angry reception, oftener a reverent one—it was ultimately treasured, venerated, almost worshipped, by the Church of this same rebuked and humiliated Israel. We ask ourselves what this has to say about the true origin of these utterances, and the true nature of the environment into which they fell. Do they not bear witness to the supernatural in both? It was not "human nature" which, in a race quite as prone, at least, as any other, to assert itself, produced these intense and persistent rebukes from within, and secured for them a profound and lasting veneration. The

Hebrew Scriptures, in this as in other things, are a literature which mere man, mere Israelite man, "could not have written if he would, and would not have written if he could."* Somehow, the Prophets not only spoke with an authority more than human, but they were known to speak with it. There was a national consciousness of divine privilege; and it was inextricably bound up with a national conviction that the Lord of the privileges had an eternal right to reprove His privileged ones, and that He had, as a fact, His accredited messengers of reproof, whose voice was not theirs but His; not the mere outcry of patriotic zealots but the Oracle of God. Yea, an awful privilege was involved in the reception of such reproofs: "You only have I known; *therefore* will I punish you" (Amos iii. 2).

But this is a recollection by the way. St Paul, so we saw in our last study, has quoted Isaiah's stern message, only now to stay his troubled heart on the fact that the unbelief of Israel in his day was, if we may dare to put it so, no surprise to the Lord, and therefore no shock to the servant's faith. But is he to stop there, and sit down, and say, "This must be so"? No; there is more to follow, in this discourse on Israel and God. He has "good words, and comfortable words" (Zech. i. 13), after the woes of the last two chapters, and after those earlier passages of the Epistle where the Jew is seen only in his hypocrisy, and rebellion, and pride. He has to speak of a faithful Remnant, now as always present, who make as it were the golden unbroken link

* I borrow the phrase from the late Prof. H. Rogers' *Supernatural Origin of the Bible inferred from Itself*, a book of masterly thinking and reasoning.

between the nation and the promises. And then he has to lift the curtain, at least a corner of the curtain, from the future, and to indicate how there lies waiting there a mighty blessing for Israel, and through Israel for the world. Even now the mysterious "People" was serving a spiritual purpose in their very unbelief; they were occasioning a vast transition of blessing to the Gentiles, by their own refusal of blessing. And hereafter they were to serve a purpose of still more illustrious mercy. They were yet, in their multitudes, to return to their rejected Christ. And their return was to be used as the means of a crisis of blessing for the world.

We seem to see the look and hear the voice of the Apostle, once the mighty Rabbi, the persecuting patriot, as he begins now to dictate again. His eyes brighten, and his brow clears, and a happier emphasis comes into his utterance, as he sets himself to speak of his people's good, and to remind his Gentile brethren how, in God's plan of redemption, all their blessing, all they know of salvation, all they possess of life eternal, has come to them through Israel. Israel is the Stem, drawing truth and life from the unfathomable soil of the covenant of promise. They are the grafted Branches, rich in every blessing—because they are the mystical seed *of Abraham*, in Christ.

Ver. 1. **I say therefore, Did God ever thrust* away His people? Away with the thought! For I** am an Israelite, of Abraham's seed, Benjamin's tribe; full member of the theocratic race (Ἰσραηλίτης), and of its first royal and always loyal tribe; in my own person, there-

Ver. 2. fore, I am an instance of Israel still in covenant. **God never* thrust away His people, whom He**

* We attempt to express the aorist thus, with hesitation.

foreknew with the foreknowledge of eternal choice and purpose.* That foreknowledge was "not according to their works," or according to their power; and so it holds its sovereign way across and above their long unworthiness. **Or do you not know, in Elijah,** in his story, in the pages marked with his name, **what the Scripture says? How he intercedes before God,** on God's own behalf, against Israel, saying (1 Kings xix. 10), "**Lord, Thy prophets they killed, and**
Ver. 3. **Thy altars they dug up; and I was left solitary,**
Ver. 4. **and they seek my life**"? But what says the oracular answer (ὁ χρηματισμός) to him? "**I have left for Myself seven thousand men, men who** (οἵτινες) **bowed never knee to Baal**" (1 Kings xix. 18). **So**
Ver. 5. **therefore at the present season also there proves to be** (γέγονεν) **a remnant,** "*a leaving*" (λεῖμμα), left by the Lord for Himself, **on the principle of** (κατὰ) **election of grace;** their persons and their number following a choice and gift whose reasons lie in God alone. And then follows one of those characteristic "foot-notes" of
Ver. 6. which we saw an instance above (x. 17): (**But if by grace, no longer of works;** "*no longer*," in the sense of a logical succession and exclusion; **since the grace proves** (γίνεται), on the other principle, **no longer grace. But if of works, it is no longer grace; since the work is no longer work.**† That is to say, when once the grace-principle is admitted, as it is here assumed to be, "*the work*" of the man who is its subject is "*no longer work*" in the sense which makes

* See above, p. 237.

† This last sentence, "*But if of works, etc.*," is only doubtfully supported by documents. But it bears, to our mind, strong internal marks of genuineness. It is at once too difficult, and too *deeply* related to the context, to look like the insertion of a scribe.

an antithesis to grace; it is no longer so much toil done in order to so much pay to be given. In other words, the two supposed principles of the divine Choice are in their nature mutually exclusive. Admit the one as the condition of the "election," and the other ceases; you cannot combine them into an amalgam. If the election is of grace, *no* meritorious antecedent to it is possible in the subject of it. If it is according to meritorious antecedent, *no* sovereign freedom is possible in the divine action, such freedom as to bring the saved man, the saved remnant, to an adoring confession of unspeakable and mysterious mercy.

This is the point, here in this passing "foot-note," as in the longer kindred statements above (ch. ix.), of the emphasized allusion to "*choice*" and "*grace*." He writes thus that he may bring the believer, Gentile or Jew, to his knees, in humiliation, wonder, gratitude, and trust. "Why did I, the self-ruined wanderer, the self-hardened rebel, come to the Shepherd who sought me, surrender my sword to the King who reclaimed me? Did I reason myself into harmony with Him? Did I lift myself, hopelessly maimed, into His arms? No; it was the gift of God, *first*, last, and in the midst. And if so, it was the choice of God." That point of light is surrounded by a cloud-world of mystery, though within those surrounding clouds there lurks, as to God, only rightness and love. But the point of light is there, immovable, for all the clouds; where fallen man chooses God, it is thanks to God who has chosen fallen man. Where a race is not "*thrust away*," it is because "*God foreknew*." Where some thousands of members of that race, while others fall away, are found faithful to God, it is because He has "*left them for Himself, on the principle of choice of grace*." Where, amidst a wide-

spread rejection of God's Son Incarnate, a Saul of Tarsus, an Aquila, a Barnabas, behold in Him their Redeemer, their King, their Life, their All, it is on that same principle. Let the man thus beholding and believing give *the whole* thanks for his salvation in the quarter where it is all due. Let him not confuse one truth by another. Let not this truth disturb for a moment his certainty of personal moral freedom, and of its responsibility. Let it not for a moment turn him into a fatalist. But let him abase himself, and give thanks, and humbly trust Him who has thus laid hold of him for blessing. As he does so, in simplicity, not speculating but worshipping, he will need no subtle logic to assure him that he is to pray, and to work, without reserve, for the salvation of all men. It will be more than enough for him that His SOVEREIGN bids him do it, and tells him that it is according to His heart.

To return a little on our steps, in the matter of the Apostle's doctrine of the divine Choice: the reference in this paragraph to the seven thousand faithful in Elijah's day suggests a special reflection. To us, it seems to say distinctly that the "election" intended all along by St. Paul cannot possibly be explained adequately by making it either an election (to whatever benefits) of mere masses of men, as for instance of a nation, considered apart from its individuals; or an election merely to privilege, to opportunity, which may or may not be used by the receiver. As regards national election, it is undoubtedly present and even prominent in the passage, and in this whole section of the Epistle. For ourselves, we incline to see it quite simply in ver. 2 above; "*His people, whom He foreknew.*" We read there, what we find so often in the Old Testament, a sovereign choice of a nation to

stand in special relation to God; of a nation taken, so to speak, in the abstract, viewed not as the mere total of so many individuals, but as a quasi-personality. But we maintain that the idea of election takes another line when we come to the "*seven thousand.*" Here we are thrown at once on the thought of individual experiences, and the ultimate secret of them, found only in the divine Will affecting the individual. The "seven thousand" had no aggregate life, so to speak. They formed, *as* the seven thousand, no organism or quasi-personality. They were "*left*" not as a mass, but as units; so isolated, so little grouped together, that even Elijah did not know of their existence. They were just so many individual men, each one of whom found power, by faith, to stand personally firm against the Baalism of that dark time, with the same individual faith which in later days, against other terrors, and other solicitations, upheld a Polycarp, an Athanasius, a Huss, a Luther, a Tyndale, a De Seso, a St Cyran. And the Apostle quotes them as an instance and illustration of the Lord's way and will with the believing of all time. In their case, then, he both passes as it were through national election to individual election, as a permanent spiritual mystery; and he shews that he means by this an election not only to opportunity but to holiness. The Lord's "*leaving them for Himself*" lay behind their not bowing their knees to Baal. Each resolute confessor was individually enabled, by a sovereign and special grace. He was a true human personality, freely acting, freely choosing not to yield in that terrible storm. But behind his freedom was the higher freedom of the Will of God, saving him from himself that he might be free to confess and suffer. To our mind, no part of the Epistle more clearly than this passage

affirms this individual aspect of the great mystery. Ah, it is a mystery indeed; we have owned this at every step. And it is never for a moment to be treated therefore as if we knew all about it. And it is never therefore to be used to confuse the believer's thought about other sides of truth. But it is there, as a truth among truths; to be received with abasement by the creature before the Creator, and with humble hope by the simple believer.

He goes on with his argument, taking up the thread broken by the "foot-note" upon grace and works:

Ver. 7. What therefore? What Israel, the nation, the character, seeks after, righteousness in the court of God, this it lighted not upon (*οὐκ ἐπέτυχεν*),* as one who seeks a buried treasure in the wrong field "lights not upon" it; but the election, the chosen ones, the "seven thousand" of the Gospel era, did light upon it. But the rest were hardened, (not as if God had created their hardness, or injected it; but He gave it to be its own penalty;)

Ver. 8. as it stands written (Isai. xxix. 10, and Deut. xxix. 4 †), "God gave them a spirit of slumber, eyes not to see, and ears not to hear, even to this day." A persistent ("*unto this day*") unbelief was the sin of Israel in the Prophets' times, and it was the same in those of the Apostles. And the condition was the same; God "gave" sin to be its own way of retribution. And David says (Psal.

Ver. 9. lxix. 22), in a Psalm full of Messiah, and of the awful retribution justly ordained to come on His im-

* The aorists *sum up* the manifold history.

† Such a combination of citations is a significant witness to the Apostle's view of the O. T. as, from its divine side, *one Book* everywhere.

penitent enemies, "Let their table turn into a trap, and into toils (θήρα), and into a stumbling-block, and into a requital to them; darkened be their eyes, not to see, and their back ever bow Thou together."

Ver. 10.

The words are awful, in their connexion here, and in themselves, and as a specimen of a class. Their purpose here is to enforce the thought that there is such a thing as positive divine action in the self-ruin of the impenitent; a *fiat* from the throne which "gives" a coma to the soul, and beclouds its eyes, and turns its blessings into a curse. Not one word implies the thought that He who so acts meets a soul tending upwards and turns it downward; that He ignores or rejects even the faintest enquiry after Himself; that He is Author of one particle of the sin of man. But we do learn that the adversaries of God and Christ may be, and, where the Eternal so sees it good, are, *sentenced* to go their own way, even to its issues in destruction. The context of every citation here, as it stands in the Old Testament, shews abundantly that those so sentenced are no helpless victims of an adverse fate, but sinners of their own will, in a sense most definite and personal. Only, a sentence of judgment is concerned also in the case; "*Fill ye up then the measure*" (Matt. xxiii. 32).

But then also in themselves, and as a specimen of a class, the words are a dark shadow in the Scripture sky. It is only by the way that we can note this here, but it must not be quite omitted in our study. This sixty-ninth Psalm is a leading instance of the several Psalms actuated by the Prophet appears calling for the sternest storm. Burden his enemies. What thoughtful heart has of the Will of awful mystery so presented? Read in might be free to c devotion, or sung perhaps to some part of the Episth th the minster-roof, they still tend

to affront the soul with the question, Can this possibly be after the mind of Christ? And there rises before us the form of One who is in the act of Crucifixion, and who just then articulates the prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Can these "imprecations" have His sanction? Can He pass them, endorse them, as His Word?

The question is full of pressing pain. And no answer can be given, surely, which shall relieve all that pain; certainly nothing which shall turn the clouds of such passages into rays of the sun. They *are* clouds; but let us be sure that they belong to the cloud-land which gathers *round the Throne*, and which only conceals, not wrecks, its luminous and immovable righteousness and love. Let us remark, for one point, that this same dark Psalm is, by the witness of the Apostles, as taught by their Master, a Psalm full of Messiah. It was undoubtedly claimed as His own mystic utterance by THE LAMB of the Passion. He speaks in these dread words who also says, in the same utterance (ver. 9), "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up." So the Lord Jesus did endorse this Psalm. He more than endorsed it; He adopted it as His own. Let this remind us further that the utterer of these denunciations, even the first and non-mystical utterer,—David, let us say,—appears in the Psalm not merely as a private person crying out about his violated personal rights, but as an ally and vassal of God, one whose life and cause is identified with His. Just in proportion as this is so, the violation of his life and peace, by enemies described as quite consciously and deliberately malicious, is a violation of the whole sanctuary of divine righteousness. If so, is it incredible that even the darkest words of such a Psalm are to be read as a true echo from the depths of

man to the Voice which announces "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man that doeth evil"? Perhaps even the most watchful assertor of the divine character of Scripture is not bound to assert that no human frailty in the least moved the spirit of a David when he, in the sphere of his own personality, thought and said these things But we have no right to assert, as a known or necessary thing, that it was so. And we have right to say that in themselves these utterances are but a sternly true response to the avenging indignation of the Holy One.

In any case, do not let us talk with a loose facility about their incompatibility with "the spirit of the New Testament." From one side, the New Testament is an even sterner Book than the Old; as it must be of course, when it brings sin and holiness "out into the light" of the Cross of Christ. It is in the New Testament that, "the souls" of saints at rest are heard saying (Rev. vi. 10), "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" It is in the New Testament that an Apostle writes (2 Thess. i. 6), "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them which trouble you." It is the Lord of the New Testament, the Offerer of the Prayer of the Cross, who said (Matt. xxiii. 32-35) "Fill ye up the measure of your fathers. I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth."

His eyes must have rested, often and again, upon the denunciations of the Psalms. He saw in them that which struck no real discord, in the ultimate spiritual depth, with His own blessed compassions. Let us not

resent what He has countersigned. It is His, not ours, to know all the conditions of those mysterious outbursts from the Psalmists' consciousness. It is ours to recognize in them the intensest expression of what rebellious evil merits, and will find, as its reward.

But we have digressed from what is the proper matter before us. Here, in the Epistle, the sixty-ninth Psalm is cited only to affirm with the authority of Scripture the mystery of God's action in sentencing the impenitent adversaries of His Christ to more blindness and more ruin. Through this dark and narrow door the Apostle is about to lead us now into "a large room" of hope and blessing, and to unveil to us a wonderful future for the now disgraced and seemingly rejected Israel.

CHAPTER XXIII

ISRAEL'S FALL OVERRULED, FOR THE WORLD'S BLESSING, AND FOR ISRAEL'S MERCY

ROMANS xi. 11-24

THE Apostle has been led a few steps backwards in the last previous verses. His face has been turned once more toward the dark region of the prophetic sky, to see how the sin of Christ-rejecting souls is met and punished by the dreadful "*gift*" of slumber, and apathy, and the transmutation of blessings to snares. But now, decisively, he looks sunward. He points our eyes, with his own, to the morning light of grace and promise. We are to see what Israel's fall has had to do with the world's hope and with life in Christ, and then what blessings await Israel himself, and again the world through him.

Ver. 11. I say, therefore, (the phrase resumes the point of view to which the same words above (ver. 1) led us,) did they stumble that they might fall? Did their national rejection of an unwelcome because unworldly Messiah take place, in the divine permission, with the positive divine purpose that it should bring on a final rejection of the nation, its banishment out of its place in the history of redemption? Away with the thought! But their partial fall* is the occasion of God's

* Παράπτωμα: so we venture to render the word here, where its compound form gets a special point from its neighbourhood to the simple verb πίπτειν (πέσωσι).

salvation (ἡ σωτηρία) for the Gentiles, with a view to move them, the Jews, to jealousy, to awake them to a sight of what Christ is, and of what their privilege in Him might yet be, by the sight of His work and glory in once pagan lives.

Observe here the divine benignity which lurks even under the edges of the cloud of judgment. And observe too, thus close to the passage which has put before us the mysterious side of divine action on human wills, the daylight simplicity of *this* side of that action; the loving skill with which the world's blessing is meant by the God of grace to act, exactly in the line of human feeling, upon the will of Israel.

But would that "the Gentiles" had borne more in heart that last short sentence of St Paul's, through these long centuries since the Apostles fell asleep! It is one of the most marked, as it is one of the saddest, phenomena in the history of the Church that for ages, almost from the days of St John himself, we look in vain either for any appreciable Jewish element in Christendom, or for any extended effort on the part of Christendom to win Jewish hearts to Christ by a wise and loving evangelization. With only relatively insignificant exceptions this was the abiding state of things till well within the eighteenth century, when the German Pietists began to call the attention of believing Christians to the spiritual needs and prophetic hopes of Israel, and to remind them that the Jews were not only a beacon of judgment, or only the most impressive and awful illustration of the fulfilment of prophecy, but the bearers of yet unfulfilled predictions of mercy for themselves and for the world. Meanwhile, all through the Middle Age, and through generations of preceding and following time also, Christendom did little for Israel

but retaliate, reproach, and tyrannize. It was so of old in England; witness the fires of York. It is so to this day in Russia, and where the *Judenhetze* inflames innumerable hearts in Central Europe.

No doubt there is more than one side to the persistent phenomenon. There is a side of mystery; the permissive sentence of the Eternal has to do with the long affliction, however caused, of the people which once uttered the fatal cry, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. xxvii. 25). And the wrong-doings of Jews, beyond a doubt, have often made a dark occasion for a "Jew-hatred," on a larger or narrower scale. But all this leaves unaltered, from the point of view of the Gospel, the sin of Christendom in its tremendous failure to seek, in love, the good of erring Israel. It leaves as black as ever the guilt of every fierce retaliation upon Jews by so-called Christians, of every slanderous belief about Jewish creed or life, of every unjust anti-Jewish law ever passed by Christian king or senate. It leaves an undiminished responsibility upon the Church of Christ, not only for the flagrant wrong of having too often animated and directed the civil power in its oppressions of Israel, and not only for having so awfully neglected to seek the evangelization of Israel by direct appeals for the true Messiah, and by an open setting forth of His glory, but for the deeper and more subtle wrong, persistently inflicted from age to age, in a most guilty unconsciousness—the wrong of having failed to manifest Christ to Israel through the living holiness of Christendom. Here, surely, is the very point of the Apostle's thought in the sentence before us: "*Salvation to the Gentiles, to move the Jews to jealousy.*" In his inspired idea, Gentile Christendom, in Christ, was to be so pure, so beneficent, so happy, finding manifestly in

its Messianic Lord such resources for both peace of conscience and a life of noble love, love above all directed towards opponents and traducers, that Israel, looking on, with eyes however purblind with prejudice, should soon see a moral glory in the Church's face impossible to be hid, and be drawn as by a moral magnet to the Church's hope. Is it the fault of God (may He pardon the formal question, if it lacks reverence), or the fault of man, man carrying the Christian name, that facts have been so wofully otherwise in the course of history? It is the fault, the grievous fault, of us Christians. The narrow prejudice, the iniquitous law, the rigid application of exaggerated ecclesiastical principle, all these things have been man's perversion of the divine idea, to be confessed and deplored in a deep and interminable repentance. May the mercy of God awaken Gentile Christendom, in a manner and degree as yet unknown, to remember this our indefeasible debt to this people everywhere present with us, everywhere distinct from us;—the debt of *a life*, personal and ecclesiastical, so manifestly pure and loving in our Lord the Christ as to "move them to the jealousy" which shall claim Him again for their own. Then we shall indeed be hastening the day of full and final blessing, both for themselves and for the world.

To that bright coming day the Apostle points us now, more directly than ever: **But if their partial**
Ver. 12. **fall*** **be the world's wealth, and their lessening** (ἥττημα), their reduction, (a reduction in one aspect to a race of scattered exiles, in another to a mere remnant of "Israelites indeed,") be the Gentiles' wealth, the occasion by which "the unsearchable wealth of Messiah"

* Παράπτωμα: see above p. 294.

(Eph. iii. 8) has been as it were forced into Gentile receptacles, how much more their fulness, the filling of the dry channel with its ample ideal stream, the change from a believing remnant, fragments of a fragmentary people, to a believing nation, reanimated and reunited? What blessings for "the world," for "the Gentiles," may not come through the vehicle of such an Israel?

Ver. 13. But* to you I speak, the Gentiles†; to you, because if I reach the Jews, in the way I mean, it must be through you. So far indeed as I, distinctively I (ἐγώ), am the Gentiles' Apostle, I glorify my ministry as such; I rejoice, Pharisee that I once was, to be devoted as no other Apostle is to a ministry for those whom I once thought of as of outcasts in religion. But I speak as your own Apostle, and to you, if perchance I

Ver. 14. may move the jealousy of my flesh and blood,‡ and may save some from amongst them, by letting them as it were overhear what are the blessings of you Gentile Christians, and how it is the Lord's purpose to use those blessings as a magnet to wandering Israel.§ His hope is that, through the Roman congregation, this glorious open secret will come out, as they meet their Jewish neigh-

* Read δὲ not γάρ. It is the "*but*" of a slight pause and resumption.

† The converts of the Roman Mission were surely Gentiles for the most part. See further below, ver. 25.

‡ Τὴν σάρκα μου: we venture to write "*flesh and blood*" as the nearest equivalent in our parlance to the vigorous Greek, "*my flesh.*"

§ It will be seen that we punctuate the Greek here as follows: Ὑμῖν δὲ λέγω τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (ἐφ' ὅσον μὲν οὖν εἰμὶ ἐγὼ ἐθνῶν ἀπόστολος, τὴν διακονίαν μου δοξάζω) εἴ πως κτλ. The thought of his "*glory*" in his "*ministry*" is surely *parenthetical*; thrown in to remind them that his plea for Israel means no change of heart towards his Gentile converts, or any wavering in the certainty that in Christ they are as completely "the people of God" as Israel is. The "main line" of the sentence runs past this parenthesis: "To you Gentiles I speak, in the hope of moving the jealousy of the Jews."

bours and talk with them. So would one here, another there, "in the streets and lanes of the City," be drawn to the feet of Jesus, under the constraint of that "jealousy" which means little else than the human longing to understand what is evidently the great joy of another's heart; a "jealousy" on which often grace can fall, and use it as the vehicle of divine light and life.

He says only, "*some of them*"; as he does in the sister Epistle; 1 Cor. ix. 22.* He recognizes it as his present task, indicated alike by circumstance and revelation, to be not the glad ingatherer of vast multitudes to Christ, but the patient winner of scattered sheep. Yet let us observe that none the less he spends his whole soul upon that winning, and takes no excuse from a glorious future to slacken a single effort in the difficult present.

Ver. 15. **For if the throwing away of them, their downfall** as the Church of God, **was the world's reconciliation**, the instrumental or occasioning cause of the direct proclamation to the pagan peoples of the Atonement of the Cross, **what will their reception be, but life from the dead?** That is to say, the great event of Israel's return to God in Christ, and His to Israel, will be the signal and the means of a vast rise of spiritual life in the Universal Church, and of an unexampled ingathering of regenerate souls from the world. When Israel, as a Church, fell, the fall worked good for the world merely by driving, as it were, the apostolic preachers out from the Synagogue, to which they so much longed to cling. The Jews did anything but aid the work. Yet even so they were made an occasion for world-wide good. When they are

* Cp. too 2 Cor. iii. 14-16 with this whole passage.

"received again," as this Scripture so definitely affirms that they shall be received, the case will be grandly different. As before, they will be "occasions." A national and ecclesiastical return of Israel to Christ will of course give occasion over the whole world for a vastly quickened attention to Christianity, and for an appeal for the world's faith in the facts and claims of Christianity, as bold and loud as that of Pentecost. But more than this; Israel will now be not only occasion but agent. The Jews, ubiquitous, cosmopolitan, yet invincibly national, coming back in living loyalty to the Son of David, the Son of God, will be a positive power in evangelization such as the Church has never yet felt. Whatever the actual facts shall prove to be in the matter of their return to the Land of Promise* (and who can watch without deep reflection the nation-less land and the land-less nation?) no prediction obliges us to think that the Jews will be withdrawn from the wide world by a national resettlement in their Land. A nation is not a Dispersion merely because it has individual citizens widely dispersed; if it has a true national centre, it is a people at home, a people with a home. Whether as a central mass in Syria, or as also a presence everywhere in the human world, Israel will thus be ready, once restored to God in Christ, to be a more than natural evangelizing power.

Let this be remembered in every enterprise for the spiritual good of the great Dispersion now. Through such efforts God is already approaching His hour of blessing, long expected. Let that fact animate and give a glad patience to His workers, on whose work He surely begins in our day to cast His smile of growing blessing.

* This chapter is silent on that great matter.

Now the argument takes a new direction. The restoration thus indicated, thus foretold, is not only sure to be infinitely beneficial. It is also to be looked for and expected as a thing lying so to speak in the line of spiritual fitness, true to the order of God's plan. In His will, when He went about to create and develop His Church, Israel sprung from the dry ground as the sacred Olive, rich with the sap of truth and grace, full of branch and leaf. From the tents of Abraham onward, the world's true spiritual light and life was there. There, not elsewhere, was revelation, and God-given ordinance, and "the covenants, and the glory." There, not elsewhere, the Christ of God, for whom all things waited, towards whom all the lines of man's life and history converged, was to appear. Thus, in a certain profound sense, all true salvation must be not only "of" Israel (John iv. 24) but through him. Union with Christ was union with Abraham. To become a Christian, that is to say, one of Messiah's men, was to become, mystically, an Israelite. From this point of view the Gentile's union with the Saviour, though not in the least less genuine and divine than the Jew's, was, so to speak, less normal. And thus nothing could be more spiritually normal than the Jew's recovery to his old relation to God, from which he had violently dislocated himself. These thoughts the Apostle now presses on the Romans, as a new motive and guide to their hopes, prayers, and work. (Do we gather from the length and fulness of the argument that already it was difficult to bring Gentiles to think aright of the chosen people in their fall and rebellion?) He reminds them of the inalienable consecration of Israel to special divine purposes. He points them to the ancient Olive, and boldly tells them that they are, themselves, only a graft of a wild stock,

inserted into the noble tree. Not that he thinks of the Jew as a superior being. But the Church of Israel was the original of the Church. So the restoration of Israel to Christ, and to the Church, is a recovery of normal life, not a first and abnormal grant of life.

Ver. 16. **But if the first-fruit was holy, holy is the kneaded lump too.** Abraham was as it were the Lord's First-fruits of mankind, in the field of His Church. "Abraham's seed" are as it were the mass kneaded from that first-fruits; made of it. Was the first-fruits holy, in the sense of consecration to God's redeeming purpose? Then that which is made of it must somehow still be a consecrated thing, even though put aside as if "common" for awhile. And if the root was holy, holy are the branches too; the lineal heirs of Abraham are still, ideally, potentially, consecrated to Him who separated Abraham to Himself, and moved him to his great self-separation. Ver. 17. **But if some of the branches** (how tender is the euphemism of the "*some*"!) **were broken off, while you, wild-olive as you were, were grafted in among them, in their place of life and growth, and became a sharer of the root and of the Olive's fatness,—do not boast over the torn-off branches.** Ver. 18. **But if you do boast over them—not you carry the root, but the root carries you.** Ver. 19. **You will say then, The branches were broken off—that I might be grafted in. Good: true—** and untrue: because of their unbelief they were broken off, while you because of your faith stand. They were no better beings than you, in themselves. But neither are you better than they, in yourself. They and you alike are, personally, mere subjects of redeeming mercy; owing all to Christ; possessing all only as accepting

Christ. "Where is your boasting, then?" Do not be
Ver. 21. high-minded, but fear, fear yourself, your sin, your enemy. For if God did not spare the natural branches, take care lest He spare not you either.
Ver. 22. See therefore God's goodness and sternness. On those who fell, came His sternness (ἀποτομία, not ἀποτομίαν); but on you, His goodness, if you abide by that (τῇ) goodness, with the adherence and response of faith; since you too will be cut out otherwise. And
Ver 23. they too, if they do not abide by their (τῇ) unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able
Ver. 24. to graft them in again. For if you from the naturally wild olive were cut out, and non-naturally (παρὰ φύσιν) were grafted into the Garden-Olive, how much more shall those, the branches naturally, be grafted into their own Olive!

Here are more topics than one which call for reverent notice and study.

1. The imagery of the Olive, with its root, stem, and branches. The Olive, rich and useful, long-lived, and evergreen, stands, as a "nature-parable" of spiritual life, beside the Vine, the Palm, and the Cedar, in the Garden of God. Sometimes it pictures the individual saint, living and fruitful in union with his Lord (Psal. lii. 8). Sometimes it sets before us the fertile organism of the Church, as here, where the Olive is the great Church Universal in its long life before and after the historical coming of Christ; the life which in a certain sense began with the Call of Abraham, and was only magnificently developed by the Incarnation and Passion. Its Root, in this respect, is the great Father of Faith. Its Stem is the Church of the Old Testament, which coincided, in the matter of external privilege, with the nation of Israel, and to which at least the immense majority of

true believers in the elder time belonged. Its Branches (by a slight and easy modification of the image) are its individual members, whether Jewish or Gentile. The Master of the Tree, arriving on the scene in the Gospel age, comes as it were to prune His Olive, and to graft. The Jewish "branch," if he is what he seems, if he believes indeed and not only by hypothesis, abides in the Tree. Otherwise, he is—from the divine point of view—broken off. The Gentile, believing, is grafted in, and becomes a true part of the living organism; as genuinely and vitally one with Abraham in life and blessing as his Hebrew brother. But the fact of the Hebrew "race" in root and stem rules still so far as to make the re-ingrafting of a Hebrew branch, repenting, more "natural" (not more possible, or more beneficial, but more "natural") than the first ingrafting of a Gentile branch. The whole Tree is for ever Abrahamic, Israelite, in stock and growth; though all mankind has place now in its forest of branches.

2. The imagery of Grafting. Here is an instance of partial, while truthful, use of a natural process in Scripture parable. In our gardens and orchards it is the wild stock which receives, in grafting, the "good" branch; a fact which lends itself to many fertile illustrations. Here, on the contrary, the "wild" branch is inserted into the "good" stock. But the olive-yard yields to the Apostle all the imagery he really needs. He has before him, ready to hand, the Tree of the Church; all that he wants is an illustration of communication and union of life by artificial insertion. And this he finds in the olive-dresser's art, which shews him how a vegetable fragment, apart and alien, can by human design be made to grow into the life of the tree, as if a native of the root.

3. The teaching of the passage as to the Place of Israel in the divine Plan of life for the world. We have remarked on this already, but it calls for reiterated notice and recollection. "At sundry times, and in divers manners," and through many and divers races and civilizations, God has dealt with man, and is dealing with him, in the training and development of his life and nature. But in the matter of man's spiritual salvation, in the gift to him, in his Fall, of the life eternal, God has dealt with man, practically, through *one* race, Israel. Let it never be forgotten that the "sundry times and divers manners" of the apostolic Epistle (Heb. i. 1) are all referred to "the prophets"; they are the "times" and "manners" of the Old Testament revelation. And when at length the same Eternal Voice spoke to man "*in the Son*" (ἐν Υἱῷ), that Son came of Israel, "took hold of Abraham's seed" (Heb. ii. 16), and Himself bore definite witness that "salvation is from the Jews" (John iv. 24). Amidst the unknown manifoldness of the work of God for man, and in man, this is single and simple —that in one racial line only runs the stream of authentic and supernatural revelation; in the line of this mysteriously chosen Israel. From this point of view, the great Husbandman has planted not a forest but a Tree; and the innumerable trees of the forest can get the sap of Eden only as their branches are grafted by His hand into His one Tree, by the faith which unites them to Him who is the Root below the root, "the Root of David," and of Abraham.

4. The appeal to the new-grafted "branch" to "abide by the goodness of God." We have listened, as St Paul has dictated to his scribe, to many a deep word about a divine and sovereign power on man;

about man's absolute debt to God for the fact that he believes and lives. Yet here, with equal decision, we have man thrown back on the thought of his responsibility, of the contingency in a certain sense of his safety on his fidelity.* "If you are true to mercy, mercy will be true to you; otherwise you too will be broken off." Here, as in our study of earlier passages, let us be willing to go all along with Scripture in the seeming inconsistency of its absolute promises and its contingent cautions. Let us, like it, "go to both extremes"; then we shall be as near, probably, as our finite thought can be at present to the whole truth as it moves, a perfect sphere, in God. Is the Christian worn and wearied with his experience of his own pollution, instability, and helplessness? Let him embrace, without a misgiving, the whole of that promise, "My sheep shall never perish." Has he drifted into a vain confidence, not in Christ, but in privilege, in experience, in apparent religious prosperity? Has he caught himself in the act of saying, even in a whisper, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are"? Then let him listen in time to the warning voice, "Be not high-minded, but fear"; "Take heed lest He spare not thee." And let him put no pillow of theory between the sharpness of that warning and his soul. Penitent, self-despairing, resting in Christ alone, let him "*abide by the goodness of God.*"

* "To our safety our sedulity is required." Hooker, *Sermon on the Perpetuity of Faith in the Elect* (at the close of the sermon). See the whole sermon, with its temperate and well-balanced assertion of the power of grace.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL DIRECTLY FORETOLD: ALL IS OF AND FOR GOD

ROMANS xi. 25-36

THUS far St Paul has rather reasoned than predicted. He has shewn his Gentile friends the naturalness, so to speak, of a restoration of Israel to Christ, and the manifest certainty that such a restoration will bring blessing to the world. Now he advances to the direct assertion, made with a Prophet's full authority, that so it shall be. "*How much rather shall they be grafted into their own Olive?*" The question implies the assertion; nothing remains but to open it in full.

Ver. 25. **For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of this mystery,** this fact in God's purposes, impossible to be known without revelation,* but luminous when revealed; **(that you may not be wise in your own esteem,** valuing yourselves on an insight which is all the while only a partial glimpse); **that failure of perception** (πώρωσις), **in a measure, in the case of many,** not all, of the nation, **has come upon Israel,** and will

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* Such is the normal meaning of μυστήριον in the N. T. It is a thing which in itself may or may not be what we mean by "mysterious." But it is a thing which mere observation and reasoning cannot *à priori* arrive at: God must disclose it.

continue until the fulness * of the Gentiles shall come in, until Gentile conversion shall be in some sense a flowing tide. Ver. 26. **And so all Israel,** Israel as a mass, no longer as by scattered units, **shall be saved,** coming to the feet of Him in whom alone is man's salvation from judgment and from sin; **as it stands written** (Psal. xiv. 7, Isai. lix. 20, with Isai. xxvii. 9), "**There shall come from Sion the Deliverer; He shall turn away all impiety** (ἀσεβείας) **from Jacob;** and Ver. 27. **such they shall find the covenant I shall have granted,**† such shall prove to be My promise and provision, 'ordered and sure,' **when I shall take away their sins,**" in the day of My pardoning and restoring return to them.

This is a memorable passage. It is in the first place one of the most definitely predictive of all the prophetic utterances of the Epistles. Apart from all problems of explanation in detail, it gives us this as its message on the whole; that there lies hidden in the future, for the race of Israel, a critical period of overwhelming blessing. If anything is revealed as fixed in the eternal plan, which, never violating the creature's will yet is not subject to it, it is this. We have heard the Apostle speak fully, and without compromise, of the sin of Israel; the hardened or paralysed spiritual perception, the refusal to submit to pure grace, the restless quest for a valid self-righteousness, the deep exclusive arrogance. And thus the promise of coming mercy, such as shall surprise the world, sounds all the more sovereign and magnificent. It shall come; so says Christ's prophet Paul. Not because of historical ante-

* Πλήρωμα is the practical realization of an ideal.

† So we paraphrase αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἡ παρ' Ἐμοῦ διαθήκη.

cedents, or in the light of general principles, but because of the revelation of the Spirit, he speaks of that wonderful future as if it were in full view from the present; "*All Israel shall be saved.*"

We read "no date prefixed." As far as this chapter is concerned, years and days are as if they were not. On the whole, surely, a large range of process is in his view; he cannot expect to see fulfilled within a narrow season the accomplishment of all the preliminaries to the great event. But he says nothing about this. All we gather is that he sees in the future a great progress of Gentile Christianity; a great impression to be made by this on the mind of Israel; a vast and comparatively sudden awakening of Israel, by the grace of God, however brought to bear; the salvation of Israel in Christ on a national scale; "the receiving of them again"; and "life from the dead" as the result—life from the dead to the world at large. However late or soon, with whatever attendant events, divine or human, thus it shall be. The "*spiritual failure of perception in part*" shall vanish. "*The Deliverer shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*" "*All Israel shall be saved.*"

"Believest thou the Prophets?" The question, asked of Agrippa by St Paul, comes to us from this prediction of his own. "Lord, we believe." Our Master knows that for us in our day it is not easy. The bad air of materialism, and the profound and stolid fatalism which it involves, is thick around us. And one symptom of its malign influence is the growing tendency in the Church to limit, to minimize, to explain if possible away, from the Scriptures, the properly and distinctively superhuman, whether of work or word. Men bearing the Christian name, and bearing

it often with loyal and reverent intention, seem to think far otherwise than their Lord thought about this very element of prediction in the holy Book, and would have us believe that it is no great thing to grasp, and to contend for. But as for us, we desire in all things to be of the opinion of Him who is the eternal Truth and Light, and who took our nature, expressly, as to one great purpose, in order to unfold to us articulately His opinion. He lived and died in the light and power of predictive Scripture. He predicted. He rose again to commission His Apostles, as the Spirit should teach them, to see "things to come" (John xvi. 13). To us, this oracle of His "chosen Vessel" gives us articles of faith and hope. We do not understand, but we believe, because here it is written, that after these days of the prevalence of unbelief, after all these questions, loud or half articulate, angry or agonizing, "Where is the promise?" the world shall see a spiritual miracle on a scale unknown before. "*All Israel shall be saved.*" Even so, Lord Jesus Christ, the Deliverer. Fill us with the patience of this hope, for Thy chosen race, and for the world.

It is almost a pain to turn from this conspectus of the passage to a discussion of some of its details. But it is necessary; and for our purpose it need be only brief. Whatever the result may be, it will leave untouched the grandeur of the central promise.

1. "*Until the fulness of the Gentiles come in.*" Does this mean that the stream of Gentile conversions shall have *flowed and ceased*, before the great blessing comes to Israel? Certainly the Greek may carry this meaning; perhaps, taken quite apart, it carries it more easily than any other. But it has this difficulty, that it would assign to the "*salvation*" of Israel no

influence of blessing upon the Gentile world. Now ver. 12 has implied that "*the fulness*" of Israel is to be the more-than-wealth of "*the world*," of "*the Gentiles*." And ver. 15 has implied, if we have read it aright, that it is to be to "*the world*" as "*life from the dead*." This leads us to explain the phrase here to refer not to the close of the ingathering of the Gentile children of God, but to a time when that process shall be, so to speak, running high.* That time of great and manifest grace shall be the occasion to Israel of the shock, as it were, of blessing; and from Israel's blessing shall date an unmeasured further access of divine good for the world.

As we pass, let us observe the light thrown by these sentences on the duty of the Church in evangelizing the Gentiles for the Jews, as well as the Jews for the Gentiles. *Both* holy enterprises have a destined effect outside themselves. The evangelist of Africa, India, China, is working for the hour of the "salvation of all Israel." The evangelist of the Hebrew Dispersion is preparing Israel for that hour of final blessing when the "saved" nation shall, in the hand of God, kindle the world with holy life.

2. "*All Israel shall be saved.*" It has been held by some interpreters that this points to the Israel of God, the spiritual sons of Abraham. If so, it would be fairly paraphrased as a promise that when the Gentile conversions are complete, and the "spiritual failure of perception" gone from the Jewish heart, the family of faith shall be complete. But surely it puts violence on words, and on thought, to explain "Israel" in this whole passage mystically. Interpretation becomes an arbitrary

* The aorist εἰσέλθῃ may rather gather up the great ingathering into one thought than mark a narrow crisis in it.

work if we may suddenly do so here, where the antithesis of Israel and "the Gentiles" is the very theme of the message. No; we have here the nation, chosen once to a mysterious speciality in the spiritual history of man, chosen with a choice never cancelled, however abeyant. A blessing is in view for the nation; a blessing spiritual, divine, all of grace, quite individual in its action on each member of the nation, but national in the scale of its results. We are not obliged to press the word "*all*" to a rigid literality. Nor are we obliged to limit the crisis of blessing to anything like a moment of time. But we may surely gather that the numbers blessed will be at least the vast majority, and that the work will not be chronic but critical. A transition, relatively swift and wonderful, shall shew the world a nation penitent, faithful, holy, given to God.

3. The quotations from Psalms and Prophets (verses 26, 27) offer more questions than one. They are closely interlaced, and they are not literal quotations. "*Out of Sion*" takes the place of "*for Zion.*" "*He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob*" takes the place of "*For them that turn from transgression in Jacob.*" "*This is the covenant*" takes the place of "*This is His blessing.*" And there are other minute points of variation. Yet we reverently trace in the originals and the citations, which all alike are the work of prophetic organs of the Spirit, the great ruling thought, identical in both, that "*the Deliverer*" belongs primarily to "*Zion,*" and has in store primarily a blessing for her people.

Are we, with some devout interpreters, to explain the words, "*The Deliverer shall come out of Sion,*" as predicting a personal and visible return of the Ascended Jesus to the literal Zion, in order to the salvation of Israel, and

an outgoing of Him from thence to the Dispersion, or the world, in millennial glory? We deliberately forbear, in this exposition, to discuss in detail the great controversy thus indicated. We leave here on one side some questions, eagerly and earnestly asked. Will Israel return to the Land as Christian or as anti-Christian? Will the immediate power for their conversion be the visible Return of the Lord, or will it be an effusion of His Spirit, by which, spiritually, He shall visit and bless? What will be the attendant works and wonders of the time? All we do now is to express the conviction that the prophetic quotations here cannot be held to predict *unmistakably* a visible and local Return. If we read them aright, their import is satisfied by a paraphrase somewhat thus: "It stands predicted that to Zion, that is, to Israel, belongs the Deliverer of man, and that for Israel He is to do His work, whenever finally it is done, with a speciality of grace and glory." Thus explained, the "*shall come*" of ver. 26 is the abstract future of divine purpose. In the eternal plan, the Redeemer was, when He first came to earth, to come to, for, and from "Zion." And His saving work was to be on lines, and for issues, for ever characterized by that fact.

Assuredly the Lord Jesus Christ is, personally, literally, visibly, and to His people's eternal joy, coming again; "this same Jesus, in like manner" (Acts i. 11). And as the ages unfold themselves, assuredly the insight of the believing Church into the fulness and, if we may say so, manifoldness of that great prospect grows. But it still seems to us that a deep and reverent caution is called for before we attempt to treat of any detail of that prospect, as regards time, season, mode, as if we quite knew. Across *all* lines of interpretation of unfulfilled

prophecy—to name one problem only—it lies as an unsolved riddle how all the saints of all ages are equally bidden to watch, as those who "know not *what hour* their Lord shall come."

But let us oftener and oftener, however we may differ in detail, recite to one another the glorious essence of our hope. "To them that look for Him will He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation"; "We shall meet the Lord in the air"; "So shall we be ever with the Lord" (Heb. ix. 28, 1 Thess. iv. 17).

We shall never quite understand the chronology and process of unfulfilled prophecy, till then.

Now briefly and in summary the Apostle concludes this "Epistle within the Epistle"; this oracle about Israel. As regards the Gospel, from the point of
Ver. 28. view of the evangelization of the world apart from Judaism, that "gospelling" which was, as it were, precipitated by the rebellion of Israel, they are enemies, on account of you, permitted, for your sakes, in a certain sense, to take a hostile attitude towards the Lord and His Christ, and to be treated accordingly; but as regards the election, from the point of view of the divine choice, they are beloved, on account of the
Ver. 29. Fathers; for irrevocable* are the gifts and the call of our (τοῦ) God. The "*gifts*" of unmerited choice, of a love uncaused by the goodness of its object, but coming from the depth of the Eternal; the "*call*" which not only invites the creature, but effects the end of the invitation†; these are things which in their nature

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* Ἀμεταμέλητα: literally, "*unrepented-of*," and so, "*admitting no repentance*," μεταμέλεια, "*change of mind*." This is fairly represented by "*irrevocable*."

† See above, p. 19.

are not variable with the variations of man and of time. The nation so gifted and called, "not according to its works," is for ever the unalterable object of the eternal affection.

May we not extend the reference of a sentence so absolute in its oracular brevity, and take it to speak the secret of an indefectible mercy not only to nation, but to individual? Here as elsewhere we shall need to remember the rule which bids us, in the heights and depths of all truth, "go to both extremes." Here as elsewhere we must be reverently careful how we apply the oracle, and to whom. But does not the oracle say this, that where the eternal Love has, without merit, in divine speciality, settled upon a person, there, not arbitrarily but by a law, which we cannot explain but which we can believe, it abides for ever? Still, this is a reflection to be made only in passing here. The immediate matter is a chosen people, not a chosen soul; and

Ver. 30. so he proceeds: For as once you obeyed not our (τῷ) God, but now, in the actual state of things, in His grace, found mercy, on occasion of their disobedience;

Ver. 31. so they too now obeyed not, on occasion of your mercy, in mysterious connexion with the compassion which, in your pagan darkness, revealed salvation to you,* that they too may find mercy. Yes, even their "*disobedience*," in the mystery of grace, was permitted *in order to* their ultimate blessing; it was to be overruled to that self-discovery which lies deep in all true repentance, and springs up towards life eternal in

* It is possible to render here: "*they did not obey your mercy*"; *i.e.*, they refused submission to that Gospel in which you found embodied the mercy of God. But the balance of thoughts and sentences is in favour of the rendering above.

the saving "confidence of self-despair." The pagan (ch. i.) was brought to self-discovery as a rebel against God indicated in nature; the Jew (ch. ii.) as a rebel against God revealed in Christ. This latter, if such a comparison is possible, was the more difficult and as it were advanced work in the divine plan. It took place, or rather it is taking and shall take place, later in order, and nearer to the final and universal triumph of redemption.

Ver. 32. **For God shut them all** (*τοὺς πάντας*) **up into disobedience, that He might have mercy upon them all.** With a *fiat* of judicial permission He let the Gentile develop his resistance to right into unnatural outrage. He let the Jew develop his into the desperate rejection of his own glorious Messiah. But He gave the *fiat* not as a God who did not care, a mere supreme Law, a Power sitting unconcerned above the scene of sin. He let the disease burst into the plague-spot in order that the guilty victim might ask at last for His remedy, and might receive it as mere and most astonishing mercy.

Let us not misuse the passage by reading into it a vain hope of an indiscriminate actual salvation, at the last, of all individuals of the race; a predestinarian hope for which Scripture not only gives no valid evidence, but utters against it what at least sound like the most urgent and unequivocal of its warnings. The context here, as we saw in another connexion just now, has to do rather with masses than with persons; with Gentiles and Jews in their common characteristics rather than taken as individuals. Yet let us draw from the words, with reverent boldness, a warrant to our faith wholly to trust the Eternal to be, even in the least fathomable of His dealings, true to Himself, true to eternal Love, whatever be the action He shall take.

Here the Apostle's voice, as we seem to listen to it, pauses for a moment, as he passes into unspoken thoughts of awe and faith. He has now given out his prophetic burthen, telling us Gentiles how great has been the sin of Israel, but how great also is Israel's privilege, and how sure his coming mercy. And behind this grand special revelation there still rise on his soul those yet more majestic forms of truth which he has led us to look upon before; the Righteousness of God, the justifying grace, the believing soul's dominion over sin, the fulness of the Spirit, the coming glory of the saints, the emancipated Universe, the eternal Love. What remains, after this mighty process of spiritual discoveries, but to adore? Listen, as he speaks again, and again the pen moves upon the paper:

Ver. 33. **Oh depth of wealth of God's wisdom and knowledge too! How past all searching are**
Ver. 34. **His judgments, and past all tracking are His ways! "For who ever knew the Lord's mind?**
Ver. 35. **Or who ever proved His counsellor?"* Or who ever first gave to Him, and requital shall be**
Ver. 36. **made to the giver (αὐτῷ)? Because out of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things†: to Him be the glory, unto the ages. Amen.**

Even so, Amen. We also prostrate our being, with the Apostle, with the Roman saints, with the whole Church, with all the company of heaven, and give ourselves to that action of pure worship in which the creature, sinking lowest in his own eyes, yea out of his

* He quotes nearly verbatim from Isai. xl. 13. Cp. Jerem. xxiii. 18.

† Τὰ πάντα: the Greek gives us at once the items and the sum of the "*all*."

own sight altogether, rises highest into the light of his Maker. What a moment this is, what an occasion, for such an approach to Him who is the infinite and personal Fountain of being, and of redemption! We have been led from reason to reason, from doctrine to doctrine, from one link to another in a golden chain of redeeming mercies. We have had the dream of human merit expelled from the heart with arrows of light; and the pure glory of a grace most absolute, most merciful, has come in upon us in its place. All along we have been reminded, as it were in fragments and radiant glimpses, that these doctrines, these truths, are no mere principles in the abstract, but expressions of the will and of the love of a Person; that fact full of eternal life, but all too easily forgotten by the human mind, when its study of religion is carried away, if but for an hour, from the foot of the Cross, and of the Throne. But now all these lines converge upwards to their Origin. By the Cross they reach the Throne. Through the Work of the SON—One with the FATHER, for of the Son too it is written (Col. i. 16) that "all things are through Him, and unto Him"—through His Work, and in it, we come to the Father's Wisdom and Knowledge, which drew the plan of blessing, and as it were calculated and furnished all its means. We touch that point where the creature gravitates to its final rest, the vision of the Glory of God. We repose, with a profound and rejoicing silence, before the fact of mysteries too bright for our vision. After all the revelations of the Apostle we own with him in faith, with an acquiescence deep as our being, the fact that there is no searching, no tracking out, the final secrets of the ways of God. It becomes to us wonderfully sufficient, in the light of Christ, to know that "the Lord, the Lord

God, merciful and gracious," is also Sovereign, Ultimate, His own eternal Satisfaction ; that it is infinitely fit and blessed that, as His Will is the true efficient cause of all things, and His Presence their secret of continuance, so He is Himself their final Cause, their End, their Goal ; they fulfil their idea, they find their bliss, in being altogether His ; "all things are UNTO HIM."

"*To whom be the glory, unto the ages. Amen.*" The advancing "ages," *αἰῶνες*, the infinite developments of the eternal life, what do we know about them? Almost nothing, except the greatest fact of all ; that in them for ever the redeemed creature will glorify not itself but the Creator ; finding an endless and ever fuller youth, an inexhaustible motive, a rest impossible to break, a life in which indeed "they *cannot* die any more," in surrendering always all its blissful wealth of being to the will and use of the BLESSED ONE.

In these "ages" we already are, in Christ. We shall indeed grow for ever with their eternal growth, in Him, to the glory of the grace of God. But let us not forget that we are already in their course, as regards that life of ours which is hid with Christ in God. With that recollection, let us give ourselves often, and as by the "second nature" of grace, to adoration. Not necessarily to frequent long abstractions of our time from the active services of life ; we need only read on into the coming passages of the Epistle to be reminded that we are hallowed, in our Lord, to a life of unselfish contact with all the needs around us. But let that life have for its interior, for its animation, the spirit of worship. Taking by faith our all from God, let us inwardly always give it back to Him, as those who not only own with the simplest gratitude that He has redeemed us from condemnation and from sin, but who have seen with

an adoring intuition that we and our all are of the "all things" which, being "of Him," and "by Him," are also wholly "unto Him," by an absolute right, by the ultimate law of our being, as we are the creatures of the eternal Love.

CHAPTER XXV

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT THE ISSUE OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH

ROMANS xii. 1-8

AGAIN we may conjecture a pause, a long pause and deliberate, in the work of Paul and Tertius. We have reached the end, generally speaking, of the dogmatic and so to speak oracular contents of the Epistle. We have listened to the great argument of Righteousness, Sanctification, and final Redemption. We have followed the exposition of the mysterious unbelief and the destined restoration of the chosen nation; a theme which we can see, as we look back on the perspective of the whole Epistle, to have a deep and suggestive connexion with what went before it; for the experience of Israel, in relation to the sovereign will and grace of God, is full of light thrown upon the experience of the soul. Now in order comes the bright sequel of this mighty antecedent, this complex but harmonious mass of spiritual facts and historical illustrations of the will and ways of the Eternal. The voice of St Paul is heard again; and he comes full upon the Lord's message of duty, conduct, character.

As out of some cleft in the face of the rocky hills rolls the full pure stream born in their depths, and runs under the sun and sky through green meadows

and beside the thirsty homes of men, so here from the inmost mysteries of grace comes the message of all-comprehensive holy duty. The Christian, filled with the knowledge of an eternal love, is told how not to dream, but to serve, with all the mercies of God for his motive.

This is indeed in the manner of the New Testament; this vital sequence of duty and doctrine; the divine Truths first, and then and therefore the blessed Life. To take only St Paul's writings, the Ephesian and Colossian Epistles are each, practically, bisected by a line which has eternal facts before it and present duties, done in the light and power of them, after it. But the whole Book of God, in its texture all over, shews the same phenomenon. Someone has remarked with homely force that in the Bible everywhere, if only we dig deep enough, we find "*Do right*" at the bottom. And we may add that everywhere also we have only to dig one degree deeper to find that the precept is rooted in eternal underlying facts of divine truth and love.

Scripture, that is to say, its Lord and Author, does not give us the terrible gift of a precept isolated and in a vacuum. It supports its commandments on a base of cogent motive; and it fills the man who is to keep them with the power of a living Presence in him; this we have seen at large in the pages of the Epistle already traversed. But then, on the other hand, the Lord of Scripture does not leave the motive and the Presence without the articulate precept. Rather, because they are supplied and assured to the believer, it spreads out all the more amply and minutely a moral directory before his eyes. It tells him, as a man who now rests on God and loves Him, and in whom God dwells, not only in general that he is to "walk

and please God" but in particular "*how*" to do it (1 Thess. iv. 1). It takes his life in detail, and applies the will of the Lord to it. It speaks to him in explicit terms about moral purity, in the name of the Holy One; about patience and kindness, in the name of redeeming Love; about family duties, in the name of the Father and of the Son; about civic duties, in the name of the King Eternal. And the whole outline and all the details thus become to the believer things not only of duty but of possibility, of hope, of the strong interest given by the thought that thus and thus the beloved Master would have us use His divine gift of life. Nothing is more wonderfully free, from one point of view, than love and spiritual power. But if the love is indeed given by God and directed towards Him in Christ, the man who loves cannot possibly wish to be his own law, and to spend his soul's power upon his own ideas or preferences. His joy and his conscious aim must be to do, in detail, the will of the Lord who is now so dear to him; and therefore, in detail, to know it.

Let us take deep note of this characteristic of Scripture, its minuteness of precept, in connexion with its revelation of spiritual blessing. If in any sense we are called to be teachers of others, let us carry out the example. Richard Cecil, wise and pregnant counsellor in Christ, says that if he had to choose between preaching precepts and preaching privileges, he would preach privileges; because the privileges of the true Gospel tend in their nature to suggest and stimulate right action, while the precepts taken alone do not reveal the wealth of divine life and power. But Cecil, like his great contemporaries of the Evangelical Revival, constantly and diligently preached as a fact both privilege and precept; opening with energetic

hands the revealed fulness of Christ, and then and therefore teaching "them which had believed through grace" not only the idea of duty, but its details. Thomas Scott, at Olney, devoted his week-night "lecture" in the parish church, almost exclusively, to instructions in daily Christian life. Assuming that his hearers "knew Christ" in personal reality, he told them how to be Christians in the home, in the shop, in the farm; how to be consistent with their regenerate life as parents, children, servants, masters, neighbours, subjects. There have been times, perhaps, when such didactic preaching has been too little used in the Church. But the men who, under God, in the last century and the early years of this century, revived the message of Christ Crucified and Risen as all in all for our salvation, were eminently diligent in teaching Christian morals. At the present day, in many quarters of our Christendom, there is a a remarkable revival of the desire to apply saving truth to common life, and to keep the Christian always mindful that he not only has heaven in prospect, but is to travel to it, every step, in the path of practical and watchful holiness. This is a sign of divine mercy in the Church. This is profoundly Scriptural.

Meanwhile, God forbid that such "teaching how to live" should ever be given, by parent, pastor, schoolmaster, friend, where it does not first pass through the teacher's own soul into his own life. Alas for us if we shew ever so convincingly, and even ever so winningly, the bond between salvation and holiness, and do not "walk accurately" (Eph. v. 15) ourselves, in the details of our walk.

As we actually approach the rules of holiness now before us, let us once more recollect what we have

seen all along in the Epistle, that holiness is the aim and issue of the entire Gospel. It is indeed an "evidence of life," infinitely weighty in the enquiry whether a man knows God indeed and is on the way to His heaven. But it is much more; it is the expression of life; it is the form and action in which life is intended to come out. In our orchards (to use again a parable we have used already) the golden apples are evidences of the tree's species, and of its life. But a wooden label could tell us the species, and leaves can tell the life. The fruit is more than label or leaf; it is the thing for which the tree is there. We who believe are "chosen" and "ordained" to "bring forth fruit" (John xv. 16), fruit much and lasting. The eternal Master walks in His garden for the very purpose of seeing if the trees bear. And the fruit He looks for is no visionary thing; it is a life of holy serviceableness to Him and to our fellows, in His Name.

But now we draw near again and listen:

Ver. 1. **I exhort you therefore, brethren, by means of the compassions of God**; using as my logic and my fulcrum this "depth of riches" we have explored; this wonderful Redemption, with its sovereignty, its mercy, its acceptance, its holiness, its glory; this overruling of even sin and rebellion, in Gentile and in Jew, into occasions for salvation; these compassionate indications in the nearer and the eternal future of golden days yet to come;—**I exhort you therefore to present**, to give over, **your bodies as a sacrifice**, an altar-offering, **living, holy, well-pleasing, unto God; for this** (ἥτις) **is your rational devotion** (λατρεία). That is to say, it is the "*devotion*," the *cultus*, the worship-service, which is done by the reason, the mind, the thought and will, of the man who has found God in Christ. The Greek

term, *latreia*, is tinged with associations of ritual and temple; but it is taken here, and qualified by its adjective, on purpose to be lifted, as in paradox, into the region of the soul. The robes and incense of the visible sanctuary are here out of sight; the individual believer is at once priest, sacrifice, and altar; he immolates himself to the Lord,—living, yet no longer to himself.

But observe the pregnant collocation here of "*the body*" with "*the reason*." "*Give over your bodies*"; not now your spirit, your intelligence, your sentiments, your aspirations, but "*your bodies*," to your Lord. Is this an anti-climax? Have we retreated from the higher to the lower, in coming from the contemplation of sovereign grace and the eternal glory to that of the physical frame of man? No more than the Lord Jesus did, when He walked down from the hill of Transfiguration to the crowd below, and to the sins and miseries it presented. He came from the scene of glory to serve men in its abiding inner light. And even He, in the days of His flesh, served men, ordinarily, only through His sacred body; walking to them with His feet; touching them with His hands; meeting their eyes with His; speaking with His lips the words that were spirit and life. As with Him so with us. It is only through the body, practically, that we can "serve our generation by the will of God." Not without the body but through it the spirit must tell on the embodied spirits around us. We look, we speak, we hear, we write, we nurse, we travel, by means of these material servants of the will, our living limbs. Without the body, where should we be, as to other men? And therefore, without the surrender of the body, where are we, as to other men, from the point of view of the will of God?

So there is a true sense in which, while the surrender of the will is all important and primary from one point of view, the surrender of the body, the "giving over" of the body, to be the implement of God's will in us, is all-important, is crucial, from another. For many a Christian life it is the most needful of all things to remember this; it is the oblivion, or the mere half-recollection, of this which keeps that life an almost neutral thing as to witness and service for the Lord.

Ver. 2. **And do not grow* conformed to this world,** this *æon* (*αἰών*), the course and state of things in this scene of sin and death; do not play "the worldling," assuming a guise (*σχῆμα*) which in itself is fleeting, and which for you, members of Christ, must also be hollow; **but grow transfigured,** living out a lasting and genuine change of tone and conduct, in which the figure (*μορφὴ*) is only the congenial expression of the essence †—**by the renewal of your mind,** by using as an implement in the holy process that divine light which has cleared your intelligence of the mists of self-love, and taught you to see as with new eyes "the splendour of the will of God"; **so as that you test,** discerning as by a spiritual touchstone, **what is the will of God, the good, and acceptable, and perfect (will).**

Such was to be the method, and such the issue, in this development of the surrendered life. All is divine in origin and secret. The eternal "compassions," and the sovereign work of the renewing and illuminating

* The Greek imperative is present, and indicates a process.

† See Trench, *N. T. Synonyms, s.v. μορφή*, for the pregnant difference of the two nouns which are the distinctive elements here of the two verbs.

Spirit, are supposed before the believer can move one step. On the other hand the believer, in the full conscious action of his renewed "intelligence," is to ponder the call to seek "transfiguration" in a life of unworldly love, and to attain it in detail by using the new insight of a regenerated heart. He is to look, with the eyes of the soul, straight through every mist of self-will to the now beloved Will of God, as his deliberate choice, seen to be welcome, seen to be perfect, not because all is understood, but because the man is joyfully surrendered to the all-trusted Master. Thus he is to move along the path of an ever brightening transfiguration; at once open-eyed, and in the dark; seeing the Lord, and so with a sure instinct gravitating to His will, yet content to let the mists of the unknown always hang over the next step but one.

It is a process, not a crisis; "*grow* transfigured." The origin of the process, the liberation of the movement, is, at least in idea, as critical as possible; "*Give over your bodies.*" That precept is conveyed, in its Greek form (*παραστῆσαι*, aorist), so as to suggest precisely the thought of a critical surrender. The Roman Christian, and his English younger brother, are called here, as they were above (vi. 13, 19), to a transaction with the Lord quite definite, whether or no the like has taken place before, or shall be done again. They are called, as if once for all, to look their Lord in the face, and to clasp His gifts in their hands, and then to put themselves and His gifts altogether into *His* hands, for perpetual use and service. So, from the side of his conscious experience, the Christian is called to a "hallowing of himself" decisive, crucial, instantaneous. But its outcome is to be a perpetual progression, a growth, not so much "into" grace as "*in*" it

(2 Pet. iii. 18), in which the surrender in purpose becomes a long series of deepening surrenders in habit and action, and a larger discovery of self, and of the Lord, and of His will, takes effect in the "shining" of the transfigured life "more and more, unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18).

Let us not distort this truth of progression, and its correlative truth of the Christian's abiding imperfection. Let us not profane it into an excuse for a life which at the best is stationary, and must almost certainly be retrograde, because not intent upon a genuine advance. Let us not withhold "*our bodies*" from the sacred surrender here enjoined upon us, and yet expect to realize somehow, at some vague date, a "*transfiguration, by the renewal of our mind.*" We shall be indeed disappointed of that hope. But let us be at once stimulated and sobered by the spiritual facts. As we are "yielded to the Lord," in sober reality, we are in His mercy "liberated for growth." But the growth is to come, among other ways, by the diligent application of "the renewal of our mind" to the details of His blessed Will.

And it will come, in its true development, only in the line of holy humbleness. To exalt oneself, even in the spiritual life, is not to grow; it is to wither. So the Apostle goes on:

Ver. 3. **For I say, through the grace that has been given me,** "*the grace*" of power for apostolic admonition, **to every one who is among you, not to be high-minded beyond what his mind should be, but to be minded toward sober-mindedness, as to each God distributed faith's measure.** That is to say, let the individual never, in himself, forget his brethren, and the mutual relation of each to all in Christ. Let him

never make himself the centre, or think of his personal salvation as if it could really be taken alone. The Lord, the sovereign Giver of faith, the Almighty Bringer of souls into acceptance and union with Christ by faith, has given thy faith to thee, and thy brother's faith to him; and why? That the individual gifts, the bounty of the One Giver, might join the individuals not only to the Giver but to one another, as recipients of riches many yet one, and which are to be spent in service one yet many. The One Lord distributes the one faith-power into many hearts, "*measuring*" it out to each, so that the many, individually believing in the One, may not collide and contend, but lovingly co-operate in a manifold service, the issue of their "like precious faith" (2 Pet. i. 2) conditioned by the variety of their lives. So comes in that pregnant parable of the Body, found only in the writings of St Paul, and in four only of his Epistles, but so stated there as to take a place for ever in the foreground of Christian truth. We have it here in the Romans, and in larger detail in the contemporary 1 Corinthians (xii. 12-27). We have it finally and fully in the later Epistolary Group, of the first Roman Captivity—in Ephesians and Colossians. There the supreme point in the whole picture, the glorious HEAD, and His relation to the Limb and to the Body, comes out in all its greatness, while in these earlier passages it appears only incidentally.* But each presentation, the earlier and the later, is alike true to its purpose. When St Paul wrote to the Asiatics, he was in presence of errors which beclouded the living splendour of the Head. When he wrote to the Romans, he was concerned rather with the inter-

* See 1 Cor. xii. 21: "*Can the head say* to the feet, etc.?"

dependence of the limbs, in the practice of Christian social life.

We have spoken of "*the parable* of the Body." But is the word "parable" adequate? "What if earth be but the shadow of heaven?" What if our physical frame, the soul's house and vehicle, be only the feebler counterpart of that great Organism in which the exalted Christ unites and animates His saints? That union is no mere aggregation, no mere alliance of so many men under the presidency of an invisible Leader. It is a thing of life. Each to the living Head, and so each to all His members, we are joined in that wonderful connexion with a tenacity, and with a relation, genuine, strong, and close as the eternal life can make it. The living, breathing man, multifold yet one, is but the reflection, as it were, of "Christ Mystical," the true Body with its heavenly Head.

Ver. 4. **For just as in one body we have many limbs, but all the limbs have not the same function,**

Ver. 5. **so we, the many, are one body in Christ,** in our personal union with Him, **but in detail** (τὸ δὲ καθεῖς), **limbs of one another,** coherent and related not as neighbours merely but as complementary parts in the whole. **But having endowments** (χαρίσματα)—**according to the grace that was given to us**—differing, be it prophecy, inspired utterance, a power from above, yet mysteriously conditioned (1 Cor. xiv. 32) by the judgment and will of the utterer, **let it follow the proportion of the man's faith,** let it be true to his entire dependence on the revealed Christ, not left at the mercy of his mere emotions, or as it were played upon by alien unseen powers;

Ver. 7. **be it active service** (διακονία), let the man be **in his service,** wholly given to it, not turning aside to covet

his brother's more mystic gift; be it the teacher, let him likewise be in his teaching, whole-hearted in his allotted work, free from ambitious outlooks from it; be it the exhorter, let him be in his exhortation; the distributer of his means, for God, with open-handedness; the superintendent, of Church, or of home, with earnestness; the pitier, (large and unofficial designation!) with gladness, doubling his gifts and works of mercy by the hallowed brightness of a heart set free from the aims of self, and therefore wholly at the service of the needing.

Ver. 8.

This paragraph of eight verses lies here before us, full all along of that deep characteristic of Gospel life, surrender for service. The call is to a profoundly passive inward attitude, with an express view to a richly active outward usefulness. Possessed, and knowing it, of the compassions of God, the man is asked to give himself over to Eternal Love for purposes of unworldly and unambitious employment in the path chosen for him, whatever it may be. In this respect above all others he is to be "*not conformed to this world*"—that is, he is to make not himself but his Lord his pleasure and ambition. "*By the renewal of his mind*" he is to view the Will of God from a point inaccessible to the unregenerate, to the unjustified, to the man not emancipated in Christ from the tyranny of sin. He is to see in it his inexhaustible interest, his line of quest and hope, his ultimate and satisfying aim; because of the practical identity of the Will and the infinitely good and blessed Bearer of it. And this more than surrender of his faculties, this happy and reposeful consecration of them, is to shew its reality in one way above all others first; in a humble estimate of self as compared with brother Christians, and a watchful

willingness to do—not another's work, but the duty that lies next.

This relative aspect of the life of self-surrender is the burthen of this great paragraph of duty. In the following passage we shall find precepts more in detail; but here we have what is to govern all along the whole stream of the obedient life. The man rich in Christ is reverently to remember others, and God's will in them, and for them. He is to avoid the subtle temptation to intrude beyond the Master's allotted work *for him*. He is to be slow to think, "I am richly qualified, and could do this thing, and that, and the other, better than the man who does it now." His chastened spiritual instinct will rather go to criticize himself, to watch for the least deficiency in his own doing of the task which at least to-day is his. He will "give himself wholly to this," be it more or less attractive to him in itself. For he works as one who has not to contrive a life as full of success and influence as he can imagine, but to accept a life assigned by the Lord who has first given to him Himself.

The passage itself amply implies that he is to use actively and honestly his renewed *intelligence*. He is to look circumstances and conditions in the face, remembering that in one way or another the will of God is expressed in them. He is to seek to understand not his duties only but his personal equipments for them, natural as well as spiritual. But he is to do this as one whose "mind" is "renewed" by his living contact and union with his redeeming King, and who has really laid his faculties at the feet of an absolute Master, who is the Lord of order as well as of power.

What peace, energy, and dignity comes into a life

which is consciously and deliberately thus surrendered! The highest range of duties, as man counts highest, is thus disburthened both of its heavy anxieties and of its temptations to a ruinous self-importance. And the lowest range, as man counts lowest, is filled with the quiet greatness born of the presence and will of God. In the memoirs of Mme de la Mothe Guyon much is said of her faithful maid-servant, who was imprisoned along with her (in a separate chamber) in the Bastille, and there died, about the year 1700. This pious woman, deeply taught in the things of the Spirit, and gifted with an understanding far above the common, appears never for an hour to have coveted a more ambitious department than that which God assigned her in His obedience. "She desired to be what God would have her be, and to be nothing more, and nothing less. She included time and place, as well as disposition and action. She had not a doubt that God, who had given remarkable powers to Mme Guyon, had called her to the great work in which she was employed. But knowing that her beloved mistress could not go alone, but must constantly have some female attendant, she had the conviction, equally distinct, that she was called to be her maid-servant." *

A great part of the surface of Christian society would be "transfigured" if its depth was more fully penetrated with that spirit. And it is to that spirit that the Apostle here definitely calls us, each and every one, not as with a "counsel of perfection" for the few, but as the will of God for all who have found out what is meant by His "compassions," and have caught even a

* Upham: *Life, etc., of Mme de la M. Guyon*, ch. I.

glimpse of His Will as "good, and acceptable, and perfect."

"I would not have the restless will
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do
Or secret thing to know;
I would be treated as a child,
And guided where I go."

CHAPTER XXVI

CHRISTIAN DUTY: DETAILS OF PERSONAL CONDUCT

ROMANS xii. 8-21

ST PAUL has set before us the life of surrender, of the "giving-over" of faculty to God, in one great preliminary aspect. The fair ideal (meant always for a watchful and hopeful realization) has been held aloft. It is a life whose motive is the Lord's "compassions"; whose law of freedom is His will; whose inmost aim is, without envy or interference towards our fellow-servants, to "finish the work He hath given *us* to do." Now into this noble outline are to be poured the details of personal conduct which, in any and every line and field, are to make the characteristics of the Christian.

As we listen again, we will again remember that the words are levelled not at a few but at all who are in Christ. The beings indicated here are not the chosen names of a Church Calendar, nor are they the passionless inhabitants of a Utopia. They are all who, in Rome of old, in England now, "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," "have the Spirit of God dwelling in them," and are living out this wonderful but most practical life in the straight line of their Father's will.

As if he could not heap the golden words too thickly together, St Paul dictates here with even unusual

abruptness and terseness of expression. He leaves syntax very much alone; gives us noun and adjective, and lets them speak for themselves. We will venture to render as nearly verbatim as possible. The English will inevitably seem more rough and crude than the Greek, but the impression given will be truer on the whole to the original than a fuller rendering would be.

Ver. 9. Your (ἡ) love, unaffected. Abominating the ill, wedded to* the good. For your brotherly-

Ver. 10. kindness, full of mutual home-affection (φιλόστοργοι). For your honour, your code of pre-

Ver. 11. cedence, deferring to one another. For your earnestness,† not slothful. For the Spirit, as regards your possession and use of the divine Indweller,

Ver. 12. glowing.‡ For the Lord, bond-serving.§ For your hope, that is to say, as to the hope of the Lord's Return, rejoicing. For your affliction, enduring.

Ver. 13. For your prayer, persevering. For the wants of the saints, for the poverty of fellow-Christians, communicating; "*sharing*" (κοινωνοῦντες), a yet nobler thing than the mere "*giving*" which may ignore the sacred fellowship of the provider and the receiver. Hospitality ‖—prosecuting (διώκοντες) as with a studious

* See the context of 1 Cor. vi. 17 for an apology for this paraphrase of κολλώμενοι.

† "*In business*" gives perhaps too special a direction to the thought, as we use the word "*business*" now. Not that that special direction would not have a noble truth in it, rightly understood.

‡ Literally "*boiling*," as a caldron on the fire.

§ This reading, τῷ κυρίῳ, as against τῷ καιρῷ, appears to be certainly right.—Our rendering is bold; for undoubtedly "*serving the Lord*" meets the Greek grammar more simply. But the datives are hitherto so clearly datives of relation that we think this also must be so explained. We can only apologize for the crude compound "*bond-serving*" by the wish to represent the full force of δουλεύοντες.

‖ Τὴν φιλοξενίαν: we may paraphrase the article by "*your* hospi-

cultivation. Bless those who persecute * you; bless, and
Ver. 14. do not curse. This was a solemnly appropriate precept, for the community over which, eight years later, the first great Persecution was to break in "blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke." And no doubt there was abundant present occasion for it, even while the scene was comparatively tranquil. Every modern mission-field can illustrate the possibilities of a "persecution" which may be altogether private, or which at most may touch only a narrow neighbourhood; which may never reach the point of technical outrage, yet may apply a truly "fiery trial" to the faithful convert. Even in circles of our decorous English society is no such thing known as the "persecution" of a life "not conformed to this world," though the assault or torture may take forms almost invisible and impalpable, except to the sensibilities of the object of it? For all such cases, as well as for the confessor on the rack, and the martyr in the fire, this precept holds expressly; "*Bless, do not curse.*" In Christ find possible the impossible; let the resentment of nature die, at His feet, in the breath of His love.

Ver. 15. To rejoice with the rejoicing, and to weep with the weeping; holy duties of the surrendered life, too easily forgotten. Alas, there is such a phenomenon, not altogether rare, as a life whose self-surrender, in some main aspects, cannot be doubted, but which utterly fails in sympathy. A certain spiritual exaltation is allowed actually to harden, or at least to seem to

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tality," or even "*Christian* hospitality." But this would exaggerate the impression it represented.

* Διώκοντας: it seems certain that this word was suggested by the διώκοντες just before, widely different as the references are. But how shall English convey this echo?

harden, the consecrated heart; and the man who perhaps witnesses for God with a prophet's ardour is yet not one to whom the mourner would go for tears and prayer in his bereavement, or the child for a perfectly human smile in its play. But this is not as the Lord would have it be. If indeed the Christian has "given his body over," it is that his eyes, and lips, and hands, may be ready to give loving tokens of fellowship in sorrow, and (what is less obvious) in gladness too, to the human hearts around him.

Ver. 16. **Feeling* the same thing towards one another;** animated by a happy identity of sympathy and brotherhood. **Not haughty in feeling,† but full of lowly sympathies ‡;** accessible, in an unaffected fellowship, to the poor, the social inferior, the weak and the defeated, and again to the smallest and homeliest interests of all. It was the Lord's example; the little child, the wistful parent, the widow with her mites, the poor fallen woman of the street, could "lead away" (*συναπάγειν*) His blessed sympathies with a touch, while He responded with an unbroken majesty of gracious power, but with a kindness for which condescension seems a word far too cold and distant.

Do not get to be wise in your own opinion; be ready always to learn; dread the attitude of mind, too possible even for the man of earnest spiritual purpose, which

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* *Φρονοῦντες*: the word "*thinking*" does not quite rightly represent the Greek. *Φρονεῖν* is not "*to think*," in the sense of articulate reflection, but to have a mental and moral disposition, of whatever kind. A popular use of the word "*to feel*" fairly represents this.

† Lit., "*not 'minding,' affecting, high things.*" We paraphrase, to retain the word "*feeling*" for *φρονεῖν*.

‡ Lit., "*being led away with the humble (things).*" Some paraphrase is necessary here.

assumes that you have nothing to learn and everything to teach; which makes it easy to criticize and to discredit; and which can prove an altogether repellent thing to the observer from outside, who is trying to estimate the Gospel by its adherent and advocate. **Requiting no one evil for evil**; safe from the spirit of retaliation, in your surrender to Him "who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not." **Taking forethought for good in the sight of all men**; not letting habits, talk, expenses, drift into inconsistency; watching with open and considerate eyes against what others may fairly think to be unchristian in you. Here is no counsel of cowardice, nc recommendation of slavery to a public opinion which may be altogether wrong. It is a precept of loyal jealousy for the heavenly Master's honour. His servant is to be nobly indifferent to the world's thought and word where he is sure that God and the world antagonize. But he is to be sensitively attentive to the world's observation where the world, more or less acquainted with the Christian precept or principle, and more or less conscious of its truth and right, is watching, maliciously or it may be wistfully, to see if it governs the Christian's practice. In view of this the man will never be content even with the satisfaction of his own conscience; he will set himself not only to do right, but to be seen to do it. He will not only be true to a monetary trust, for example; he will take care that the proofs of his fidelity shall be open. He will not only mean well towards others; he will take care that his manner and bearing, his dealings and intercourse, shall unmistakably breathe the Christian air.

Ver. 17.

Ver. 18. If possible, as regards your side, (the "*your*" is as emphatic as possible in position and

in meaning,) living at peace with all men; yes, even in pagan and hostile Rome. A peculiarly Christian principle speaks here. The men who had "given over their bodies a living sacrifice" might think, imaginably, that their duty was to court the world's enmity, to tilt as it were against its spears, as if the one supreme call was to collide, to fall, and to be glorified. But this would be fanaticism; and the Gospel is never fanatical, for it is the law of love. The surrendered Christian is not, as such, an aspirant for even a martyr's fame, but the servant of God and man. If martyrdom crosses his path, it is met as duty; but he does not court it as *éclat*. And what is true of martyrdom is of course true of every lower and milder form of the conflict of the Church, and of the Christian, in the world.

Nothing more nobly evidences the divine origin of the Gospel than this essential precept; "as far as it lies with *you*, live peaceably with all men." Such wise and kind forbearance and neighbourliness would never have been bound up with the belief of supernatural powers and hopes, if those powers and hopes had been the mere issue of human exaltation, of natural enthusiasm. The supernatural of the Gospel leads to nothing but rectitude and considerateness, in short to nothing but love, between man and man. And why? Because it is indeed divine; it is the message and gift of the living Son of God, in all the truth and majesty of His rightfulness. All too early in the history of the Church "the crown of martyrdom" became an object of enthusiastic ambition. But that was not because of the teaching of the Crucified, nor of His suffering Apostles.

Ver. 19. Not avenging yourselves, beloved; no, give place to the wrath; let the angry opponent, the dread

persecutor, have his way, so far as your resistance or retaliation is concerned. "*Beloved*, let us love" (1 John iv. 7); with that strong and conquering love which wins by suffering. And do not fear lest eternal justice should go by default; there is One who will take care of that matter; you may leave it with Him. **For it stands written** (Deut. xxxii. 35), **"To Me belongs vengeance; I will recompense, saith the Lord."** "**But if**"* (and again he quotes the older Scriptures, finding in the Proverbs (xxv. 21, 22) the same oracular authority as in the Pentateuch), "**but if thy enemy is hungry, give him food; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for so doing thou wilt heap coals of fire on his head**"; taking the best way to the only "*vengeance*" which a saint can wish, namely, your "enemy's" conviction of his wrong, the rising of a burning shame in his soul, and the melting of his spirit in the fire of love. **Be not thou conquered by the evil, but conquer, in the good, the evil.**

Ver. 20.

Ver. 21.

"*In* the good"; as if surrounded by it,† moving invulnerable, in its magic circle, through "the contradiction of sinners," "the provoking of all men." The thought is just that of Psal. xxxi. 18, 19: "How great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man; Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from

* Read, ἀλλ' ἐὰν.

† We are aware that not seldom in the N.T. ἐν represents the Hebrew ב (of בכלם) in its familiar instrumental meaning, without any definite trace of *local* imagery. But where the more literal rendering has an obvious fitness it is best to retain it. Thus we render ἐν here by "*by*" not "*in*."

the strife of tongues." "*The good*" of this sentence of St Paul's is no vague and abstract thing; it is "the gift of God" (vi. 28); it is the life eternal found and possessed in union with Christ, our Righteousness, our Sanctification, our Redemption. Practically,* it is "not It but *He*." The Roman convert who should find it more than possible to meet his enemy with love, to do him positive good in his need, with a conquering simplicity of intention, was to do so not so much by an internal conflict between his "better self" and his worse, as by the living power of Christ received in his whole being; by "abiding in Him."

It is so now, and for ever. The open secret of divine peace and love is what it was; as necessary, as versatile, as victorious. And its path of victory is as straight and as sure as of old. And the precept to tread that path, daily and hourly, if occasion calls, is still as divinely binding as it ever was for the Christian, if indeed he has embraced "the mercies of God," and is looking to his Lord to be evermore "transfigured, by the renewing of his mind."

As we review this rich field of the flowers, and of the gold, of holiness, this now completed paragraph of epigrammatic precepts, some leading and pervading principles emerge. We see first that the sanctity of the Gospel is no hushed and cloistered "indifferentism." It is a thing intended for the open field of human life; to be lived out "before the sons of men." A strong positive element is in it. The saint is to "*abominate* the evil"; not only to deprecate it, and deplore. He

* Though the τῷ ἀγαθῷ of the Greek is certainly neuter, by its balance with τὸ κακόν.

is to be energetically "*in earnest.*" He is to "*glow*" with the Spirit, and to "*rejoice*" in the hope of glory. He is to take practical, provident pains to live not only aright, but manifestly aright, in ways which "*all men*" can recognize. Again, his life is to be essentially social. He is contemplated as one who meets other lives at every turn, and he is never to forget or neglect his relation to them. Particularly in the Christian Society, he is cherish the "family affection" of the Gospel; to defer to fellow Christians in a generous humility; to share his means with the poor among them; to welcome the strangers of them to his house. He is to think it a sacred duty to enter into the joys and the sorrows round him. He is to keep his sympathies open for despised people, and for little matters. Then again, and most prominently after all, he is to be ready to suffer, and to meet suffering with a spirit far greater than that of only resignation. He is to bless his persecutor; he is to serve his enemy in ways most practical and active; he is to conquer him for Christ, in the power of a divine communion.

Thus, meanwhile, the life, so positive, so active in its effects, is to be essentially all the while a passive, bearing, enduring, life. Its strength is to spring not from the energies of nature, which may or may not be vigorous in the man, but from an internal surrender to the claim and government of his Lord. He has "presented himself to God" (vi. 13); he has "presented his body, a living sacrifice" (xii. 1). He has recognized, with a penitent wonder and joy, that he is but the limb of a Body, and that his Head is the Lord. His thought is now not for his personal rights, his individual exaltation, but for the glory of his Head, for the fulfilment of the thought of his Head, and for the health and wealth

of the Body, as the great vehicle in the world of the gracious will of the Head.

It is among the chief and deepest of the characteristics of Christian ethics, this passive root below a rich growth and harvest of activity. All through the New Testament we find it expressed or suggested. The first Beatitude uttered by the Lord (Matt. v. 3) is given to "the poor, the mendicant (*πτωχοί*), in spirit." The last (John xx. 29) is for the believer, who trusts without seeing. The radiant portrait of holy Love (1 Cor. xiii.) produces its effect, full of indescribable life as well as beauty, by the combination of almost none but negative touches; the "total abstinence" of the loving soul from impatience, from envy, from self-display, from self-seeking, from brooding over wrong, from even the faintest pleasure in evil, from the tendency to think ill of others. Everywhere the Gospel bids the Christian take sides against himself. He is to stand ready to forego even his surest rights, if only *he* is hurt by so doing; while on the other hand he is watchful to respect even the least obvious rights of others, yea, to consider their weaknesses, and their prejudices, to the furthest just limit. He is "not to resist evil"; in the sense of never fighting for self as self. He is rather to "suffer himself to be defrauded" (1 Cor. vi. 7) than to bring discredit on his Lord in however due a course of law. The straits and humiliations of his earthly lot, if such things are the will of God for him, are not to be materials for his discontent, or occasions for his envy, or for his secular ambition. They are to be his opportunities for inward triumph; the theme of a "song of the Lord," in which he is to sing of strength perfected in weakness, of a power not his own "overshadowing" him (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10).

Such is the passivity of the saints, deep beneath

their serviceable activity. The two are in vital connexion. The root is not the accident but the proper antecedent of the product. For the secret and unostentatious surrender of the will, in its Christian sense, is no mere evacuation, leaving the house swept but empty; it is the reception of the Lord of life into the open castle of the City of Mansoul. It is the placing in His hands of all that the walls contain. And placed in His hands, the castle, and the city, will shew at once, and continually more and more, that not only order but life has taken possession. The surrender of the Moslem is, in its theory, *a mere* submission. The surrender of the Gospel is a reception also; and thus its nature is to come out in "the fruit of the Spirit."

Once more, let us not forget that the Apostle lays his main emphasis here rather on being than on doing. Nothing is said of great spiritual enterprises; everything has to do with the personal conduct of the men who, if such enterprises are done, must do them. This too is characteristic of the New Testament. Very rarely do the Apostles say anything about their converts' duty, for instance, to carry the message of Christ around them in evangelistic aggression. Such aggression was assuredly attempted, and in numberless ways, by the primeval Christians, from those who were "scattered abroad" (Acts viii. 4) after the death of Stephen onwards. The Philippians (ii. 15, 16) "shone as lights in the world, holding out the word of life." The Ephesians (v. 13) penetrated the surrounding darkness, being themselves "light in the Lord." The Thessalonians (1, i. 8) made their witness felt "in Macedonia, and Achaia, and in every place." The Romans, encouraged by St Paul's presence and sufferings, "were bold to speak the word without fear" (Phil. i. 14).

St John (3 Ep. 7) alludes to missionaries who, "for the Name's sake, went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles."

Yet is it not plain that, when the Apostles thought of the life and zeal of their converts, their first care, by far, was that they should be wholly conformed to the will of God in personal and social matters? This was the indispensable condition to their being, as a community, what they must be if they were to prove true witnesses and propagandists for their Lord.

God forbid that we should draw from this phenomenon one inference, however faint, to thwart or discredit the missionary zeal now in our day rising like a fresh, pure tide in the believing Church. May our Master continually animate His servants in the Church at home to seek the lost around them, to recall the lapsed with the voice of truth and love. May He multiply a hundredfold the scattered host of His "witnesses in the uttermost parts of the earth," through the dwelling-places of those eight hundred millions who are still pagan, not to speak of the lesser yet vast multitudes of misbelievers, Mahometan and Jewish. But neither in missionary enterprise, nor in any sort of activity for God and man, is this deep suggestion of the Epistles to be forgotten. What the Christian does is even more important than what he says. What he is is the all-important antecedent to what he does. He is "nothing yet as he ought to" be if, amidst even innumerable efforts and aggressions, he has not "presented his body a living sacrifice" for his Lord's purposes, not his own; if he has not learnt, in his Lord, an unaffected love, a holy family affection, a sympathy with griefs and joys around him, a humble esteem of himself, and the blessed art of giving way to wrath, and of overcoming evil in "the good" of the presence of the Lord.

CHAPTER XXVII

CHRISTIAN DUTY; IN CIVIL LIFE AND OTHERWISE LOVE

ROMANS xiii. 1-10

A NEW topic now emerges, distinct, yet in close and natural connexion. We have been listening to precepts for personal and social life, all rooted in that inmost characteristic of Christian morals, self-surrender, self-submission to God. Loyalty to others in the Lord has been the theme. In the circles of home, of friendship, of the Church; in the open field of intercourse with men in general, whose personal enmity or religious persecution was so likely to cross the path—in all these regions the Christian was to act on the principle of supernatural submission, as the sure way to spiritual victory.

The same principle is now carried into his relations with the State. As a Christian, he does not cease to be a citizen, to be a subject. His deliverance from the death-sentence of the Law of God only binds him, in his Lord's name, to a loyal fidelity to human statute; limited only by the case where such statute may really contradict the supreme divine law. The disciple of Christ, as such, while his whole being has received an emancipation unknown elsewhere, is to be the faithful

subject of the Emperor, the orderly inhabitant of his quarter in the City, the punctual taxpayer, the ready giver of not a servile yet a genuine deference to the representatives and ministers of human authority.

This is he to do for reasons both general and special. In general, it is his Christian duty rather to submit than otherwise, where conscience toward God is not in the question. Not weakly, but meekly, he is to yield rather than resist in all his intercourse, purely personal, with men; and therefore with the officials of order, as men. But in particular also, he is to understand that civil order is not only a desirable thing, but divine; it is the will of God for the social Race made in His Image. In the abstract, this is absolutely so; civil order is a God-given law, as truly as the most explicit precepts of the Decalogue, in whose Second Table it is so plainly implied all along. And in the concrete, the civil order under which the Christian finds himself to be is to be regarded as a real instance of this great principle. It is quite sure to be imperfect, because it is necessarily mediated through human minds and wills. Very possibly it may be gravely distorted, into a system seriously oppressive of the individual life. As a fact, the supreme magistrate for the Roman Christians in the year 58 was a dissolute young man, intoxicated by the discovery that he might do almost entirely as he pleased with the lives around him; by no defect however in the idea and purpose of Roman law, but by fault of the degenerate world of the day. Yet civil authority, even with a Nero at its head, was still in principle a thing divine. And the Christian's attitude to it was to be always that of a willingness, a purpose, to obey; an absence of the resistance whose motive lies in self-

assertion. Most assuredly his attitude was not to be that of the revolutionist, who looks upon the State as a sort of belligerent power, against which he, alone or in company, openly or in the dark, is free to carry on a campaign. Under even heavy pressure the Christian is still to remember that civil government is, in its principle, "of God." He is to reverence the Institution in its idea. He is to regard its actual officers, whatever their personal faults, as so far dignified by the Institution that their governing work is to be considered always first in the light of the Institution. The most imperfect, even the most erring, administration of civil order is still a thing to be respected before it is criticized. In its principle, it is a "*terror not to good works, but to the evil.*"

It hardly needs elaborate remark to shew that such a precept, little as it may accord with many popular political cries of our time, means anything in the Christian but a political servility, or an indifference on his part to political wrong in the actual course of government. The religion which invites every man to stand face to face with God in Christ, to go straight to the Eternal, knowing no intermediary but His Son, and no ultimate authority but His Scripture, for the certainties of the soul, for peace of conscience, for dominion over evil in himself and in the world, and for more than deliverance from the fear of death, is no friend to the tyrants of mankind. We have seen how, by enthroning Christ in the heart, it inculcates a noble inward submissiveness. But from another point of view it equally, and mightily, develops the noblest sort of individualism. It lifts man to a sublime independence of his surroundings, by joining him direct to God in Christ, by making him the Friend of God. No wonder then that, in the course of history,

Christianity, that is to say the Christianity of the Apostles, of the Scriptures, has been the invincible ally of personal conscience and political liberty, the liberty which is the opposite alike of licence and of tyranny. It is Christianity which has taught men calmly to die, in face of a persecuting Empire, or of whatever other giant human force, rather than do wrong at its bidding. It is Christianity which has lifted innumerable souls to stand upright in solitary protest for truth and against falsehood, when every form of governmental authority has been against them. It was the student of St Paul who, alone before the great Diet, uttering no denunciation, temperate and respectful in his whole bearing, was yet found immovable by Pope and Emperor: "*I can not otherwise; so help me God.*" We may be sure that if the world shuts the Bible it will only the sooner revert, under whatever type of government, to essential despotism, whether it be the despotism of the master, or that of the man. The "individual" indeed will "wither." The Autocrat will find no purely independent spirits in his path. And what then shall call itself, however loudly, "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality," will be found at last, where the Bible is unknown, to be the remorseless despot of the personality, and of the home.

It is Christianity which has peacefully and securely freed the slave, and has restored woman to her true place by the side of man. But then, Christianity has done all this in a way of its own. It has never flattered the oppressed, nor inflamed them. It has told impartial truth to them, and to their oppressors. One of the least hopeful phenomena of present political life is the adulation (it cannot be called by another name) too frequently offered to the working classes by

their leaders, or by those who ask their suffrages. A flattery as gross as any ever accepted by complacent monarchs is almost all that is now heard about themselves by the new master-section of the State. This is not Christianity, but its parody. The Gospel tells uncompromising truth to the rich, but also to the poor. Even in the presence of pagan slavery it laid the law of duty on the slave, as well as on his master. It bade the slave consider his obligations rather than his rights; while it said the same, precisely, and more at length, and more urgently, to his lord. So it at once avoided revolution and sowed the living seed of immense, and salutary, and ever-developing reforms. The doctrine of spiritual equality, and spiritual connexion, secured in Christ, came into the world as the guarantee for the whole social and political system of the truest ultimate political liberty. For it equally chastened and developed the individual, in relation to the life around him.

Serious questions for practical casuistry may be raised, of course, from this passage. Is resistance to a cruel despotism never permissible to the Christian? In a time of revolution, when power wrestles with power, which power is the Christian to regard as "*ordained of God*"? It may be sufficient to reply to the former question that, almost self-evidently, the absolute principles of a passage like this take for granted some balance and modification by concurrent principles. Read without any such reserve, St Paul leaves here no alternative, under any circumstances, to submission. But he certainly did not mean to say that the Christian must submit to an imperial order to sacrifice to the Roman gods. It seems to follow that the letter of the precept does not pronounce it inconceivable that

a Christian, under circumstances which leave his action unselfish, truthful, the issue not of impatience but of conviction, might be justified in positive resistance; such resistance as was offered to oppression by the Huguenots of the Cevennes, and by the Alpine Vaudois before them. But history adds its witness to the warnings of St Paul, and of his Master, that almost inevitably it goes ill in the highest respects with saints who "take the sword," and that the purest victories for freedom are won by those who "endure grief, suffering wrongfully," while they witness for right and Christ before their oppressors. The Protestant pastors of Southern France won a nobler victory than any won by Jean Cavalier in the field of battle when, at the risk of their lives, they met in the woods to draw up a solemn document of loyalty to Louis XV.; informing him that their injunction to their flocks always was, and always would be, "*Fear God, honour the King.*"

Meanwhile Godet, in some admirable notes on this passage, remarks that it leaves the Christian not only not bound to aid an oppressive government by active co-operation, but amply free to witness aloud against its wrong; and that his "submissive but firm conduct is itself a homage to the inviolability of authority. Experience proves that it is in this way all tyrannies have been morally broken, and all true progress in the history of humanity effected."

What the servant of God should do with his allegiance at a revolutionary crisis is a grave question for any whom it may unhappily concern. Thomas Scott, in a useful note on our passage, remarks that "perhaps nothing involves greater difficulties, in very many instances, than to ascertain to whom the authority *justly* belongs. . . . Subjection in all things lawful to the

existing authorities' is our duty at all times and in all cases; though in civil convulsions . . . there may frequently be a difficulty in determining which are 'the existing authorities.'" In such cases "the Christian," says Godet, "will submit to the new power as soon as the resistance of the old shall have ceased. In the actual state of matters he will recognize the manifestation of God's will, and will take no part in any reactionary plot."

As regards the problem of forms or types of government, it seems clear that the Apostle lays no bond *of conscience* on the Christian. Both in the Old Testament and in the New a just monarchy appears to be the ideal. But our Epistle says that "there is *no power* but of God." In St Paul's time the Roman Empire was in theory, as much as ever, a republic, and in fact a personal monarchy. In this question, as in so many others of the outward framework of human life, the Gospel is liberal in its applications, while it is, in the noblest sense, conservative in principle.

We close our preparatory comments, and proceed to the text, with the general recollection that in this brief paragraph we see and touch as it were the corner-stone of civil order. One side of the angle is the indefeasible duty, for the Christian citizen, of reverence for law, of remembrance of the religious aspect of even secular government. The other side is the memento to the ruler, to the authority, that God throws His shield over the claims of the State only because authority was instituted not for selfish but for social ends, so that it belies itself if it is not used for the good of man.

Ver. 1. **Let every soul**, every person, who has "presented his body a living sacrifice," **be submissive to the ruling authorities**; manifestly, from the context,

the authorities of the State. **For there is no authority except by God** *; **but the existing authorities have been appointed by God.** That is, the *imperium* of the King Eternal is absolutely reserved; an authority not sanctioned by Him is nothing; man is no independent source of power and law. But then, it has pleased God so to order human life and history, that His will in this matter is expressed, from time to time, in and through the actual constitution of the state. **So that the opponent of the authority withstands the ordinance of God,** Ver. 2. not merely that of man; **but the withstanders will on themselves bring sentence of judgment;** not only the human crime of treason, but the charge, in the court of God, of rebellion against His will. This is founded on the idea of law and order, which means by its nature the restraint of public mischief and the promotion, or at least protection, of public good. "Authority," even under its worst distortions, still so far keeps that aim that no human civic power, as a fact, punishes good as good, and rewards evil as evil; and thus for the common run of lives the worst settled authority is infinitely better than real anarchy. **For rulers, as a class** (*οἱ ἄρχοντες*), **are not a terror to the** Ver. 3. **good deed, but to the evil;** such is always the fact in principle, and such, taking human life as a whole, is the tendency, even at the worst, in practice, where the authority in any degree deserves its name. **Now do you wish not to be afraid of the authority? do what is good, and you shall have praise from it;** the "*praise*," at least, of being unmolested and protected. **For God's agent** (*διάκονος*) **he is to you, for what is good;** Ver. 4. through his function God, in providence, carries out

* Read *ὑπὸ* not *ἀπό*.

His purposes of order. But if you are doing what is evil, be afraid; for not for nothing (εἰκῇ), not without warrant, nor without purpose, does he wear his (τὴν) sword, symbol of the ultimate power of life and death; for

Ver. 5. God's agent is he, an avenger, unto wrath, for the practiser of the evil. Wherefore, because God is in the matter, it is a necessity to submit, not only because of the wrath, the ruler's wrath in the case supposed, but because of the conscience too; because you know, as a Christian, that God speaks through the state and through its minister, and that anarchy is therefore

Ver. 6. disloyalty to Him. For on this account too you pay taxes; the same commission which gives the state the right to restrain and punish gives it the right to demand subsidy from its members, in order to its operations; for God's ministers are they, His λειτουργοί, a word so frequently used in sacerdotal connexions that it well may suggest them here; as if the civil ruler were, in his province, an almost religious instrument of divine order; God's ministers, to this very end persevering in their task; working on in the toils of administration, for the execution, consciously or not, of the divine plan of social peace.

This is a noble point of view, alike for governed and for governors, from which to consider the prosaic problems and necessities of public finance. Thus understood, the tax is paid not with a cold and compulsory assent to a mechanical exaction, but as an act in the line of the plan of God. And the tax is devised and demanded, not merely as an expedient to adjust a budget, but as a thing which God's law can sanction,

Ver. 7. in the interests of God's social plan. Discharge therefore to all men, to all men in authority, primarily, but not only, their dues; the tax, to whom

you owe the tax, on person and property; **the toll, to whom the toll**, on merchandise; **the fear, to whom the fear**, as to the ordained punisher of wrong; **the honour, to whom the honour**, as to the rightful claimant in general of loyal deference.

Such were the political principles of the new Faith, of the mysterious Society, which was so soon to perplex the Roman statesman, as well as to supply convenient victims to the Roman despot. A Nero was shortly to burn Christians in his gardens as a substitute for lamps, on the charge that they were guilty of secret and horrible orgies. Later, a Trajan, grave and anxious, was to order their execution as members of a secret community dangerous to imperial order. But here is a private missive sent to this people by their leader, reminding them of their principles, and prescribing their line of action. He puts them in immediate spiritual contact, every man and woman of them, with the Eternal Sovereign, and so he inspires them with the strongest possible independence, as regards "the fear of man." He bids them know, for a certainty, that the Almighty One regards them, each and all, as accepted in His Beloved, and fills them with His great Presence, and promises them a coming heaven from which no earthly power or terror can for a moment shut them out. But in the same message, and in the same Name, he commands them to pay their taxes to the pagan State, and to do so, not with the contemptuous indifference of the fanatic, who thinks that human life in its temporal order is God-forsaken, but in the spirit of cordial loyalty and ungrudging deference, as to an authority representing in its sphere none other than their Lord and Father.

It has been suggested that the first serious antagonism

of the state towards these mysterious Christians was occasioned by the inevitable interference of the claims of Christ with the stern and rigid order of the Roman Family. A power which could assert the right, the duty, of a son to reject his father's religious worship was taken to be a power which meant the destruction of all social order as such; a *nihilism* indeed. This was a tremendous misunderstanding to encounter. How was it to be met? Not by tumultuary resistance, not even by passionate protests and invectives. The answer was to be that of love, practical and loyal, to God and man, in life and, when occasion came, in death.* Upon the line of that path lay at least the possibility of martyrdom, with its lions and its funeral piles; but the end of it was the peaceful vindication of the glory of God and of the Name of Jesus, and the achievement of the best security for the liberties of man.

Congenially then the Apostle closes these precepts of civil order with the universal command to love. **Owe nothing to anyone**; avoid absolutely the social disloyalty of debt; pay every creditor in full, with watchful care; **except the loving one another.** Love is to be a perpetual and inexhaustible debt, not as if repudiated or neglected, but as always due and always paying; a debt, not as a forgotten account is owing to the seller, but as interest on capital is continuously owing to the lender. And this, not only because of the fair beauty of love, but because of the legal duty of it: **For the lover of his fellow** (τὸν ἕτερον, "*the other man*," be he who he may, with whom the man has to do) **has fulfilled the law**, the law of the Second Table, the code

Ver. 8.

* "To believe, to suffer, and to love, was the primitive taste" (Milner).

of man's duty to man, which is in question here. He "*has* fulfilled" it; as having at once entered, in principle and will, into its whole requirement; so that all he now needs is not a better attitude but developed information.

Ver. 9. **For the, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not murder, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,* Thou shalt not covet," and whatever other commandment there is, all is summed up in this utterance, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"** (Lev. xix. 18). Ver. 10. **Love works the neighbour no ill; therefore love is the Law's fulfilment.**

Is it a mere negative precept then? Is the life of love to be only an abstinence from doing harm, which may shun thefts, but may also shun personal sacrifices? Is it a cold and inoperative "harmlessness," which leaves all things as they are? We see the answer in part in those words, "*as thyself*." Man "loves *himself*," (in the sense of nature, not of sin,) with a love which instinctively avoids indeed what is repulsive and noxious, but does so because it positively likes and desires the opposite. The man who "loves his neighbour *as himself*" will be as considerate of his neighbour's feelings as of his own, in respect of abstinence from injury and annoyance. But he will be more; he will be actively desirous of his neighbour's good. "*Working him no evil*," he will reckon it as much "*evil*" to be indifferent to his positive true interests as he would reckon it unnatural to be apathetic about his own. "*Working him no evil*," as one who "*loves him as himself*," he will care, and seek, to work him good.

"Love," says Leibnitz, in reference to the great controversy on Pure Love agitated by Fénelon and

* This clause is perhaps to be omitted here.

Bossuet, "is that which finds its felicity in another's good."* Such an agent can never terminate its action in a mere cautious abstinence from wrong.

The true divine commentary on this brief paragraph is the nearly contemporary passage written by the same author, 1 Cor. xiii. There, as we saw above, the description of the sacred thing, love, like that of the heavenly state in the Revelation, is given largely in negatives. Yet who fails to feel the wonderful *positive* of the effect? That is no merely negative innocence which is greater than mysteries, and knowledge, and the use of an angel tongue; greater than self-inflicted poverty, and the endurance of the martyr's flame; "chief grace below, and all in all above." Its blessed negatives are but a form of unselfish *action*. It forgets itself, and remembers others, and refrains from the least needless wounding of them, not because it wants merely "to live and let live," but because it loves them, finding its felicity in their good.

It has been said that "love is holiness, spelt short." Thoughtfully interpreted and applied, the saying is true. The holy man in human life is the man who, with the Scriptures open before him as his informant and his guide, while the Lord Christ dwells in his heart by faith as his Reason and his Power, forgets himself in a work for others which is kept at once gentle, wise, and persistent to the end, by the love which, whatever else it does, knows how to sympathize and to serve.

* See Card. Bausset, *Vie de Fénelon*, ii. 375. Leibnitz, in a letter to T. Burnet, quotes the words from a work of his own; *Amare est felicitate alterius delectari.*

CHAPTER XXVIII

CHRISTIAN DUTY IN THE LIGHT OF THE LORD'S RETURN AND IN THE POWER OF HIS PRESENCE

ROMANS xiii. 11-14

THE great teacher has led us long upon the path of duty, in its patient details, all summed up in the duty and joy of love. We have heard him explaining to his disciples how to live as members together of the Body of Christ, and as members also of human society at large, and as citizens of the state. We have been busy latterly with thoughts of taxes, and tolls, and private debts, and the obligation of scrupulous rightfulness in all such things. Everything has had relation to the seen and the temporal. The teaching has not strayed into a land of dreams, nor into a desert and a cell; it has had at least as much to do with the market, and the shop, and the secular official, as if the writer had been a moralist whose horizon was altogether of this life, and who for the future was "without hope."

Yet all the while the teacher and the taught were penetrated and vivified by a certainty of the future perfectly supernatural, and commanding the wonder and glad response of their whole being. They carried about with them the promise of their Risen Master that He would personally return again in heavenly glory, to their infinite joy, gathering them for ever

around Him in immortality, bringing heaven with Him, and transfiguring them into His own celestial Image.

Across all possible complications and obstacles of the human world around them they beheld "that blissful hope" (Tit. ii. 13). The smoke of Rome could not becloud it, nor her noise drown the music of its promise, nor her splendour of possessions make its golden vista less beautiful and less entrancing to their souls.* Their Lord, once crucified, but now alive for evermore, was greater than the world; greater in His calm triumphant authority over man and nature, greater in the wonder and joy of Himself, His Person and His Salvation. It was enough that He had said He would come again, and that it would be to their eternal happiness. He had promised; therefore it would surely be.

How the promise would take place, and when, was a secondary question. Some things were revealed and certain, as to the manner; "*This same Jesus, in like manner as ye saw Him going into heaven*" (Acts i. 11). But vastly more was unrevealed and even unconjectured. As to the time, His words had left them, as they still leave us, suspended in a reverent sense of mystery, between intimations which seem almost equally to promise both speed and delay. "Watch therefore, for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh" (Mark xiii. 35); "After a long time the Lord of the servants cometh, and reckoneth with them" (Matt. xxv. 19). The Apostle himself follows his Redeemer's example in the matter. Here and there he seems to indicate an Advent at the doors, as when he speaks of "*us* who are alive and remain" (1 Thess. iv. 15). But

* Omitte mirari beatæ
Fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ. (Horace.)

again, in this very Epistle, in his discourse on the future of Israel, he appears to contemplate great developments of time and event yet to come; and very definitely, for his own part, in many places, he records his expectation of death, not of a death-less transfiguration at the Coming. Many at least among his converts looked with an eagerness which was sometimes restless and unwholesome, as at Thessalonica, for the coming King; and it may have been thus with some of the Roman saints. But St Paul at once warned the Thessalonians of their mistake; and certainly this Epistle *suggests* no such upheaval of expectation at Rome.

Our work in these pages is not to discuss "the times and the seasons" which now, as much as then, lie in the Father's "power" (Acts i. 7). It is rather to call attention to the fact that in all ages of the Church this mysterious but definite Promise has, with a silent force, made itself as it were present and contemporary to the believing and watching soul. How at last it shall be seen that "*I come quickly*," and, "*The day of Christ is not at hand*" (Rev. xxii. 12, 20, 2 Thess. ii. 2), were both divinely and harmoniously truthful, it does not yet fully appear. But it is certain that both are so; and that in every generation of the now "long time" "the Hope," as if it were at the doors indeed, has been calculated for mighty effects on the Christian's will and work.

So we come to this great Advent oracle, to read it for our own age. Now first let us remember its wonderful illustration of that phenomenon which we have remarked already, the concurrence in Christianity of a faith full of eternity, with a life full of common duty. Here is a community of men called to live under an almost opened heaven; almost to see, as they look

around them, the descending Lord of glory coming to bring in the eternal day, making Himself present in this visible scene "with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God," waking His buried saints from the dust, calling the living and the risen to meet Him in the air. How can they adjust such an expectation to the demands of "the daily round"? Will they not fly from the City to the solitude, to the hill-tops and forests of the Apennines, to wait with awful joy the great lightning-flash of glory? Not so. They somehow, while "looking for the Saviour from the heavens" (Phil. iii. 20), attend to their service and their business, pay their debts and their taxes, offer sympathy to their neighbours in their human sadnesses and joys, and yield honest loyalty to the magistrate and the Prince. They are the most stable of all elements in the civic life of the hour, if "the powers that be" would but understand them; while yet, all the while, they are the only people in the City whose home, consciously, is the eternal heavens. What can explain the paradox? Nothing but the Fact, the Person, the Character of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not an enthusiasm, however powerful, which governs them, but a Person. And He is at once the Lord of immortality and the Ruler of every detail of His servant's life. He is no author of fanaticism, but the divine-human King of truth and order. To know Him is to find the secret alike of a life eternal and of a patient faithfulness in the life that now is.

What was true of Him is true for evermore. His servant now, in this restless close of the nineteenth age, is to find in Him this wonderful double secret still. He is to be, in Christ, by the very nature of his faith, the most practical and the most willing of the servants

of his fellow-men, in their mortal as well as immortal interests; while also disengaged internally from a bondage to the seen and temporal by his mysterious union with the Son of God, and by his firm expectation of His Return. **And this**, this law of love and duty, let us remember, let us follow, **knowing the season**, the occasion, the growing crisis (*καιρόν*); **that it is already the hour for our awaking out of sleep**, the sleep of moral inattention, as if the eternal Master were not near. **For nearer now is our salvation**, in that last glorious sense of the word "*salvation*" which means the immortal issue of the whole saving process, nearer now than when we believed, and so by faith entered on our union with the Saviour. (See how he delights to associate himself with his disciples in the blessed unity of remembered conversion; "when *we* believed.") **The night**, with its murky silence, its "poring dark," the night of trial, of temptation, of the absence of our Christ, **is far spent,*** **but the day has drawn near**; it has been a long night, *but* that means a near dawn; the everlasting sunrise of the longed-for *Parousia*, with its glory, gladness, and unveiling. **Let us put off therefore**, as if they were a foul and entangling night-robe, **the works of the darkness**, the habits and acts of the moral night, things which *we can* throw off in the Name of Christ; **but let us put on the weapons of the light**, arming ourselves, for defence, and for holy aggression on the realm of evil, with faith, love, and the heavenly hope. So to the Thessalonians five years before (1, v. 8), and to the Ephesians four years later (vi. 11-17), he wrote o

Ver. 11.

Ver. 12.

* Προέκοψε: literally, "*made progress.*" The aorist may refer to the event of the First Advent, when our eternal Sun was heralded by Himself the Morning Star. But perhaps it is best represented by the English perfect, as in the A.V. and above.

the holy Panoply, rapidly sketching it in the one place, giving the rich finished picture in the other; suggesting to the saints always the thought of a warfare first and mainly defensive, and *then* aggressive with the drawn sword, and indicating as their true armour not their reason, their emotions, or their will, taken in themselves, but the eternal facts of their revealed salvation in Christ, grasped and used by faith. **As by day, for it is** Ver. 13. already dawn, in the Lord, **let us walk* decorously,** becomingly, as we are the hallowed soldiers of our Leader; let our life not only be right in fact; let it *shew* to all men the open "*decorum*" of truth, purity, peace, and love; **not in revels and drunken bouts; not in chamberings,** the sins of the secret couch, **and profligacies,** not—to name evils which cling often to the otherwise reputable Christian—**in strife and envy,** things which are pollutions, in the sight of the Holy One, as real as lust itself. **No; put on,** clothe and arm yourselves with, **the Lord Jesus Christ,** Himself the living sum and true meaning of all that can arm the soul; **and for the flesh take no forethought lust-ward.** As if, in euphemism, he would say, "Take all possible *forethought against* the life of self (*σάρξ*), with its lustful, self-wilful gravitation away from God. And let that forethought be, to arm yourselves, as if never armed before, with Christ."

How solemnly explicit he is, how plain-spoken, about the temptations of the Roman Christian's life! The men who were capable of the appeals and revelations of the first eight chapters yet needed to be told not to drink to intoxication, not to go near the house of ill-fame, not to quarrel, not to grudge. But every modern missionary

* Περιπατήσωμεν: perhaps the aorist suggests a new outset in the "walk."

in heathendom will tell us that the like stern plainness is needed now among the new-converted faithful. And is it not needed among those who have professed the Pauline faith much longer, in the congregations of our older Christendom?

It remains for our time, as truly as ever, a fact of religious life—this necessity to press it home upon the religious, *as* the religious, that they are called to a practical and detailed holiness; and that they are never to ignore the possibility of even the worst falls. So mysteriously can the subtle "flesh," in the believing receiver of the Gospel, becloud or distort the holy import of the thing received. So fatally easy is it "to corrupt the best into the worst," using the very depth and richness of spiritual truth as if it could be a substitute for patient practice, instead of its mighty stimulus.

But glorious is the method illustrated here for triumphant resistance to that tendency. What is it? It is not to retreat from spiritual principle upon a cold naturalistic programme of activity and probity. It is to penetrate through the spiritual principle to the Crucified and Living Lord who is its heart and power; it is to bury self in Him, and to arm the will with Him. It is to look for Him as Coming, but also, and yet more urgently, to use Him as Present. In the great Roman Epic, on the verge of the decisive conflict, the goddess-mother laid the invulnerable panoply at the feet of her Æneas; and the astonished Champion straightway, first pondering every part of the heaven-sent armament, then "put it on," and was prepared. As it were at our feet is laid THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, in all He is, in all He has done, in His indissoluble union with us in it all, as we are one with Him by the Holy Ghost. It is for us to see in Him our power and victory, and to "put Him on," in a

personal act which, while all by grace, is yet in itself our own. And how is this done? It is by the "committal of the keeping of our souls unto Him" (1 Pet. iv. 19), not vaguely, but definitely and with purpose, in view of each and every temptation. It is by "living our life in the flesh by faith in the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20); that is to say, in effect, by perpetually *making use of* the Crucified and Living Saviour, One with us by the Holy Spirit; by using Him as our living Deliverer, our Peace and Power, amidst *all* that the dark hosts of evil can do against us.

Oh wonderful and all-adequate secret; "Christ, which is the Secret of God" (Col. ii. 2)! Oh divine simplicity of its depth;

"Heaven's easy, artless, unencumber'd plan"!

Not that its "ease" means our indolence. No; if we would indeed "arm ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ" we must awake and be astir to "*know whom* we have trusted" (2 Tim. i. 12). We must explore His Word about Himself. We must ponder it, above all in the prayer which converses with Him over His promises, till they live to us in His light. We must watch and pray, that we may be alert to employ our armament. The Christian who steps out into life "light-heartedly," thinking superficially of his weakness, and of his foes, is only too likely also to think of his Lord superficially, and to find of even this heavenly armour that "he cannot *go* with it, for he hath not proved it" (1 Sam. xvii. 39). But all this leaves absolutely untouched the divine simplicity of the matter. It leaves it wonderfully true that the decisive, the satisfying, *the thorough*, moral victory and deliverance comes to the Christian man not by trampling about with his own

resolves, but by committing himself to his Saviour and Keeper, who has conquered *him*, that now He may conquer "his strong Enemy" for him.

"Heaven's unencumbered plan" of "victory and triumph, against the devil, the world, and the flesh," is no day-dream of romance. It lives, it works in the most open hour of the common world of sin and sorrow. *We have seen* this "putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ" victoriously successful where the most fierce, or the most subtle, forms of temptation were to be dealt with. *We have seen* it preserving, with beautiful persistency, a life-long sufferer from the terrible solicitations of pain, and of still less endurable helplessness—every limb fixed literally immovable by paralysis on the ill-furnished bed; *we have seen* the man cheerful, restful, always ready for wise word and sympathetic thought, and affirming that his Lord, present to his soul, was infinitely enough to "keep him." *We have seen* the overwhelmed toiler for God, while every step through the day was clogged by "thronging duties," such duties as most wear and drain the spirit, yet maintained in an equable cheerfulness and as it were inward leisure by this same always adequate secret, "the Lord Jesus Christ put on." *We have known* the missionary who had, in sober earnest, hazarded his life for the blessed Name, yet ready to bear quiet witness to the repose and readiness to be found in meeting disappointment, solitude, danger, not so much by a stern resistance as by the use, then and there, confidingly, and in surrender, of the Crucified and Living Lord. Shall we dare to add, with the humiliated avowal that only a too partial proof has been made of this glorious open Secret, that *we know* by experiment that the weakest of the servants of our King, "putting on HIM,"

find victory and deliverance, where there was defeat before?

Let us, writer and reader, address ourselves afresh in practice to this wonderful secret. Let us, as if we had never done it before, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ."* Vain is our interpretation of the holy Word, which not only "abideth, but *liveth* for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23), if it does not somehow *come home*. For that Word was written on purpose to come home; to touch and move the conscience and the will, in the realities of our inmost, and also of our most outward, life. Never for one moment do we stand as merely interested students and spectators, outside the field of temptation. Never for one moment therefore can we dispense with the great Secret of victory and safety.

Full in face of the realities of sin—of Roman sin, in Nero's days; but let us just now forget Rome and Nero; they were only dark accidents of a darker essence—St Paul here writes down, across them all, these words, this spell, this Name; "*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.*" Take first a steady look, he seems to say, at your sore need, in the light of God; but then, at once, look off, look *here*. Here is the more than Antithesis to it all. Here is that by which you can be "more than conqueror." Take your iniquities at the worst; this can subdue them. Take your surroundings at the worst; this can emancipate you from their power. It is "the Lord Jesus Christ," and the "putting on" of Him.

Let us remember, as if it were a new thing, that He,

* From this point to the close of the chapter the writer has used, with modifications, passages from a Sermon (No. iii.) in his volume entitled *Christ is All.*

the Christ of Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles, is a Fact. Sure as the existence now of His universal Church, as the observance of the historic Sacrament of His Death, as the impossibility of Galilean or Pharisaic imagination having *composed*, instead of *photographed*, the portrait of the Incarnate Son, the Immaculate Lamb; sure as is the glad verification in ten thousand blessed lives to-day of all, of all, that the Christ of Scripture undertakes to be to the soul that will take Him at His own terms—so sure, across all oldest and all newest doubts, across all *gnosis* and all *agnosia*, lies the present Fact of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then let us remember that it is a fact that man, in the mercy of God, *can* "put Him on." He is not far off. He presents Himself to our touch, our possession. He says to us, "Come to Me." He unveils Himself as literal partaker of our nature; as our Sacrifice; our Righteousness, "through faith in His blood"; as the Head and Life-spring, in an indescribable union, of a deep calm tide of life spiritual and eternal, ready to circulate through our being. He invites Himself to "make His abode *with* us" (John xiv. 23); yea more, "I will come *in* to him; I will dwell *in* his heart by faith" (Rev. iii. 20; Eph. iii. 17). In that ungovernable heart of ours, that interminably self-deceptive heart (Jerem. xvii. 9), He engages to reside, to be permanent Occupant, the Master always at home. He is prepared thus to take, with regard to our will, a place of power nearer than all circumstances, and deep in the midst of all possible inward traitors; to keep His eye on their plots, His foot, not ours, upon their necks. Yes, He invites us thus to embrace Him into a full contact; to "put Him on."

May we not say of Him what the great Poet says of Duty, and glorify the verse by a yet nobler application?—

> "Thou who art victory and law
> When empty terrors overawe,
> From vain temptations dost set free,
> And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!"

Yes, we can "put Him on" as our "Panoply of Light." We can put Him on as "THE LORD," surrendering ourselves to His absolute while most benignant sovereignty and will, deep secret of repose. We can put Him on as "JESUS," clasping the truth that He, our Human Brother, yet Divine, "saves His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). We can put Him on as "CHRIST," our Head, anointed without measure by the Eternal Spirit, and now sending of that same Spirit into His happy members, so that we are indeed one with Him, and receive into our whole being the resources of His life.

Such is the armour and the arms. St Jerome, commenting on a kindred passage (Eph. vi. 13), says that "it most clearly results that by 'the weapons of God' *the Lord our Saviour* is to be understood."

We may recollect that this text is memorable in connexion with the Conversion of St Augustine. In his *Confessions* (viii. 12) he records how, in the garden at Milan, at a time of great moral conflict, he was strangely attracted by a voice, perhaps the cry of children playing: "*Take and read, take and read.*" He fetched and opened again a copy of the Epistles (*codicem Apostoli*), which he had lately laid down. "I read in silence the first place on which my eyes fell; '*Not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,*

and make no provision for the flesh in its lusts.' I neither cared, nor needed, to read further. At the close of the sentence, as if a ray of certainty were poured into my heart, the clouds of hesitation fled at once." His will was in the will of God.

Alas, there falls one shadow over that fair scene. In the belief of Augustine's time, to decide fully for Christ meant, or very nearly meant, so to accept the ascetic idea as to renounce the Christian home. But the Lord read His servant's heart aright through the error, and filled it with His peace. To us, in a surrounding religious light far clearer, in many things, than that which shone even upon Ambrose and Augustine; to us who quite recognize that in the paths of homeliest duty and commonest temptation lies the line along which the blessed power of the Saviour may best overshadow His disciple; the Spirit's voice shall say of this same text, "*Take and read, take and read.*" We will "put on," never to put off. Then we shall step out upon the old path in a strength new, and to be renewed for ever, armed against evil, armed for the will of God, with Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHAPTER XXIX

CHRISTIAN DUTY: MUTUAL TENDERNESS AND TOLERANCE: THE SACREDNESS OF EXAMPLE

ROMANS xiv. 1-23

Ver. 1. **But him who is weak**—we might almost render, him who suffers from weakness (*τὸν ἀσθενοῦντα*), **in his** (*τῇ*) **faith** (in the sense here not of creed, a meaning of *πίστις* rare in St Paul, but of reliance on his Lord; reliance not only for justification but, in this case, for holy liberty), **welcome into fellowship**—not for criticisms of his scruples, of his *διαλογισμοί*, the anxious internal debates of conscience. Ver. 2. **One man believes**, has faith, issuing in a conviction of liberty, in such a mode and degree as to eat all kinds of food; but the man in weakness eats vegetables only; an extreme case, but doubtless not uncommon, where a convert, tired out by his own scruples between food and food, cut the knot by rejecting flesh-meat altogether. **The eater**—Ver. 3. **let him not despise the non-eater***; while the non-eater—let him not judge the eater; for our (*ὁ*) God welcomed him to fellowship, when he came to the feet of His Son for acceptance. Ver. 4. **You**—who are you, thus judging Another's domestic (*οἰκέτην*)? To his own Lord, his own Master, he stands, in approval,—

* Τὸν *μὴ* (not *οὐκ*) *ἐσθίοντα*: the *μή* gives "non-eating" as not merely a fact, but a *condition*, about the man.

or, if that must be, falls, under displeasure; but he shall be upheld in approval; for able is that (ὁ) Lord* to set him so, to bid him "*stand*," under His sanctioning smile.

Ver. 5. One man distinguishes (κρίνει) day above day; while another distinguishes every day; a phrase paradoxical but intelligible; it describes the thought of the man who, less anxious than his neighbour about stated "holy-days," still aims not to "level down" but to "level up" his use of time; to count every day "holy," equally dedicated to the will and work of God. Let each be quite assured in his own mind; using the thinking-power (νοῦς) given him by his Master, let him reverently work the question out, and then live up to his ascertained convictions, while (this is intimated by the emphatic "*his own* mind") he respects the convictions of his neighbour.

Ver. 6. The man who 'minds' (ὁ φρονῶν) the day, the "holy-day" in question, in any given instance, to the Lord he 'minds' it; [and the man who 'minds' not the day, to the Lord he does not 'mind' it]†; both parties, as Christians, in their convictions and their practice, stand related and responsible, directly and primarily, to the Lord; that fact must always govern and qualify their mutual judgments. And‡ the eater, the man who takes food indifferently without scruple, to the Lord he eats, for he gives thanks at his meal to God; and the non-eater, to the Lord he does not eat the scrupled food, and gives thanks to God for that of which his conscience allows him to partake.

The connexion of the paragraph just traversed with what went before it is suggestive and instructive. There

* Read δυνατεῖ γὰρ ὁ Κύριος.

† Probably the negative limb of ver. 6. is only an explanatory gloss, not the words of the Apostle.

‡ Read καί.

is a close connexion between the two; it is marked expressly by the "*but*" (δέ) of ver. 1, a link strangely missed in the Authorized Version. The "but" indicates a difference of thought, however slight, between the two passages. And the difference, as we read it, is this. The close of the thirteenth chapter has gone all in the direction of Christian wakefulness, decision, and the battle-field of conquering faith. The Roman convert, roused by its trumpet-strain, will be eager to be up and doing, against the enemy and for his Lord, armed from head to foot with Christ. He will bend his whole purpose upon a life of open and active holiness. He will be filled with a new sense at once of the seriousness and of the liberty of the Gospel. But then—some "weak brother" will cross his path. It will be some recent convert, perhaps from Judaism itself, perhaps an ex-pagan, but influenced by the Jewish ideas so prevalent at the time in many Roman circles. This Christian, not untrustful, at least in theory, of the Lord alone for pardon and acceptance, is however quite full of scruples which, to the man fully "armed with Christ," may seem, and do seem, lamentably morbid, really serious mistakes and hindrances. The "weak brother" spends much time in studying the traditional rules of fast and feast, and the code of permitted food. He is sure that the God who has accepted him will hide His face from him if he lets the new moon pass like a common day; or if the Sabbath is not kept by the rule, not of Scripture, but of the Rabbis. Every social meal gives him painful and frequent occasion for troubling himself, and others; he takes refuge perhaps in an anxious vegetarianism, in despair of otherwise keeping undefiled. And inevitably such scruples do not terminate in themselves. They infect the man's whole tone of thinking and action. He

questions and discusses everything, with himself, if not with others. He is on the way to let his view of acceptance in Christ grow fainter and more confused. He walks, he lives; but he moves like a man chained, and in a prison.

Such a case as this would be a sore temptation to the "strong" Christian. He would be greatly inclined, of himself, first to make a vigorous protest, and then, if the difficulty proved obstinate, to think hard thoughts of his narrow-minded friend; to doubt his right to the Christian name at all; to reproach him, or (worst of all) to satirize him. Meanwhile the "weak" Christian would have his harsh thoughts too. He would not, by any means for certain, shew as much meekness as "weakness." He would let his neighbour see, in one way or other, that he thought him little better than a worldling, who made Christ an excuse for personal self-indulgence.

How does the Apostle meet the trying case, which must have crossed his own path so often, and sometimes in the form of a bitter opposition from those who were "suffering from weakness in their faith"? It is quite plain that his own convictions lay with "the strong," so far as *principle* was concerned. He "knew that nothing was unclean" (ver. 14). He knew that the Lord was not grieved, but pleased, by the temperate and thankful use, untroubled by morbid fears, of His natural bounties. He knew that the Jewish festival-system had found its goal and end in the perpetual "*let us keep the feast*" (1 Cor. v. 3) of the true believer's happy and hallowed life.* And accordingly he does, in passing, rebuke

* There seems to be a broad and intelligible difference between the Sabbath-keeping *of the Jewish law* and the Sabbath-keeping *of man*; the enjoyment and holy use of the primeval Rest for man and

"the weak" for their harsh criticisms (κρίνειν) of "the strong." But then, he throws all the more weight, the main weight, on his rebukes and warnings to "the strong." Their principle might be right on this great detail. But this left untouched the yet more stringent overruling principle, to "*walk in love*"; to take part against themselves; to live in this matter, as in everything else, for others. They were not to be at all ashamed of their special principles. But they were to be deeply ashamed of one hour's unloving conduct. They were to be quietly convinced, in respect of private judgment. They were to be more than tolerant—they were to be loving—in respect of common life in the Lord.

Their "strength" in Christ was never to be ungentle; never to be "used like a giant." It was to be shewn, first and most, by patience. It was to take the form of the calm, strong readiness to understand another's point of view. It was to appear as reverence for another's conscience, even when the conscience went astray for want of better light.

Let us take this apostolic principle out into modern religious life. There are times when we shall be specially bound to put it carefully in relation to other principles, of course. When St Paul, some months earlier, wrote to Galatia, and had to deal with an error which darkened the whole truth of the sinner's way to God as it lies straight through Christ, he did not say, "Let every man be quite assured in his own mind." He said (i. 8), "If an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel, which is not another, let him be anathema."

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beast. We take it that *that* duty and privilege is not in question here at all. The "weak" Christian was the anxious scholar of the Rabbis, not the man simply loyal to the Decalogue.

The question *there* was, Is Christ all, or is He not? Is faith all, or is it not, for our laying hold of Him? Even in Galatia, he warned the converts of the miserable and fatal mistake of "biting and devouring one another" (v. 15). But he adjured them not to wreck their peace with God upon a fundamental error. *Here*, at Rome, the question was different; it was secondary. It concerned certain details of Christian practice. Was an outworn and exaggerated ceremonialism a part of the will of God, in the justified believer's life? It was not so, as a fact. Yet it was a matter on which the Lord, by His Apostle, rather counselled than commanded. It was not of the foundation. And the always overruling law for the discussion was—the tolerance born of love. Let us in our day remember this, whether our inmost sympathies are with "the strong" or with "the weak." In Jesus Christ, it is possible to realize the ideal of this paragraph even in our divided Christendom. It is possible to be convinced, yet sympathetic. It is possible to see the Lord for ourselves with glorious clearness, yet to understand the practical difficulties felt by others, and to love, and to respect, where there are even great divergences. No man works more for a final spiritual *consensus* than he who, in Christ, so lives.

Incidentally meantime, the Apostle, in this passage which so curbs "the strong," lets fall maxims which for ever protect all that is good and true in that well-worn and often misused phrase, "the right of private judgment." No spiritual despot, no claimant to be the autocratic director of a conscience, could have written those words, "*Let every man be quite certain in his own mind*"; "*Who art thou that judgest Another's domestic?*" Such sentences assert not the right so much as *the duty*, for the individual Christian, of a reverent

"*thinking for himself.*" They maintain a true and noble individualism. And there is a special need just now in the Church to remember, *in its place*, the value of Christian individualism. The idea of the community, the society, is just now so vastly prevalent (doubtless not without the providence of God) in human life, and also in the Church, that an assertion of the individual, which was once disproportionate, is now often necessary, lest the social idea in its turn should be exaggerated into a dangerous mistake. Coherence, mutuality, the truth of the Body and the Members; all this, *in its place*, is not only important but divine. The individual must inevitably lose where individualism is his whole idea. But it is ill for the community, above all for the Church, where in the total the individual tends really to be merged and lost. Alas for the Church where the Church tries to take the individual's place in the knowledge of God, in the love of Christ, in the power of the Spirit. The religious Community must indeed inevitably lose where religious communism is its whole idea. It can be perfectly strong only where individual consciences are tender, and enlightened; where individual souls personally know God in Christ; where individual wills are ready, if the Lord call, to stand alone for known truth even against the religious Society;—if there also the individualism is not self-will, but Christian personal responsibility; if the man "thinks for himself" *on his knees*; if he reverences the individualism of others, and the relations of each to all.

The individualism of Rom. xiv., asserted in an argument full of the deepest secrets of cohesion, is the holy and healthful thing it is because it is *Christian*. It is developed not by the assertion of self, but by individual communion with Christ.

Now he goes on to further and still fuller statements in the same direction :

Ver. 7. **For none of us to himself lives, and none of us to himself dies.** How, and wherefore? Is it merely that "*we*" live lives always, necessarily, related *to one another*? He has this in his heart indeed. But he reaches it through the greater, deeper, antecedent truth of our relation *to the Lord*. The Christian is related to his brother-Christian through Christ, not to Christ through his brother, or through the common Organism in which the brethren are "each other's limbs." "*To the Lord*," with absolute directness, with a perfect and wonderful immediateness, each individual Christian is first related. His life and his death are "to others," but through Him. THE MASTER'S claim is eternally first; for it is based direct upon the redeeming work in which He bought us for Himself.

Ver. 8. **For whether we live, to the Lord we live; and whether we be dead** (*ἀποθνήσκωμεν*), **to the Lord we are dead**; in the state of the departed, as before, "relation stands." **Alike therefore whether** (*ἐάν τε οὖν*) **we be dead, or whether we live, the Lord's we are**; His property, bound first and in everything to His possession.

Ver. 9. **For to this end Christ both died and lived again,* that He might become Lord** (*κυριεύσῃ*, not *κυριεύῃ*) **of** us both dead and living.

Here is the profound truth seen already in earlier passages in the Epistle. We have had it reasoned out, above all in the sixth chapter, in its revelation of the way of Holiness, that our only possible right relations with the Lord are clasped and governed by the fact that to Him we rightly and everlastingly *belong*. There,

* Read *ἀπέθανε καὶ ἀνέζησε*.

however, the thought was more of our surrender under His rights. Here it is of the mighty antecedent fact, under which our most absolute surrender is nothing more than the recognition of His indefeasible claim. What the Apostle says here, in this wonderful passage of mingled doctrine and duty, is that, whether or no *we are owning* our vassalage to Christ, we are nothing if not *de jure* His vassals. He has not only rescued us, but so rescued us as to buy us for His own. We may be true to the fact in our internal attitude; we may be oblivious of it; but we cannot get away from it. It looks us every hour in the face, whether we respond or not. It will still look us in the face through the endless life to come.

For manifestly it is this objective aspect of our "belonging" which is here in point. St. Paul is not reasoning with the "weak" and the "strong" from their experience, from their conscious loyalty to the Lord. Rather, he is calling them to a new realization of what such loyalty should be. It is in order to this that he reminds them of the eternal claim of the Lord, made good in His Death and Resurrection; His claim to be so their Master, individually and altogether, that every thought about one other was to be governed by that claim of His on them all. "The Lord" must always interpose, with a right inalienable. Each Christian is annexed, by all the laws of Heaven, to Him. So each must—not make but *realize* that annexation, in every thought about neighbour and about brother.

The passage invites us meantime to further remark, in another direction. It is one of those utterances which, luminous with light given by their context, shine also with a light of their own, giving us revelations independent of the surrounding matter. Here one such

revelation appears; it affects our knowledge of the Intermediate State.

The Apostle,* four times over in this short paragraph, makes mention of death, and of the dead. "*No one of us dieth to Himself*"; "*Whether we die, we die unto the Lord*"; "*Whether we die, we are the Lord's*"; "*That He might be Lord of the dead.*" And this last sentence, with its mention not of the dying but of the dead, reminds us that the reference in them all is to the Christian's relation to his Lord, not only in the hour of death, but in the state after death. It is not only that Jesus Christ, as the slain One risen, is absolute Disposer of the time and manner of our dying. It is not only that when our death comes we are to accept it as an opportunity for the "glorifying of God" (John xxi. 19; Phil. i. 20) in the sight and in the memory of those who know of it. It is that when we have "passed through death," and come out upon the other side,

> "When we enter yonder regions,
> When we touch the sacred shore,"

our relation to the slain One risen, to Him who, as such, "hath the keys of Hades and of death" (Rev. i. 18), is perfectly continuous and the same. He is our absolute Master, *there* as well as here. And we, by consequence and correlation, are vassals, servants, bondservants to Him, there as well as here.

Here is a truth which, we cannot but think, richly repays the Christian's repeated remembrance and reflection; and that not only in the way of asserting the eternal rights of our blessed Redeemer over us, but in the way of shedding light, and peace, and the sense

* We transcribe here a few paragraphs from the closing pages of our book *Life in Christ and for Christ.*

of reality and expectation, on both the prospect of our own passage into eternity and the thoughts we entertain of the present life of our holy beloved ones who have entered into it before us.

Everything is precious which really assists the soul in such thoughts, and at the same time keeps it fully and practically alive to the realities of faith, patience, and obedience here below, here in the present hour. While the indulgence of unauthorized imagination in that direction is almost always enervating and disturbing to the present action of Scriptural faith, the least help to a solid realization and anticipation, supplied by the Word that cannot lie, is in its nature both hallowing and strengthening. Such a help we have assuredly here.

He who died and rose again is at this hour, in holy might and right, "the Lord" of the blessed dead. Then, the blessed dead are vassals and *servants* of Him who died and rose again. And all our thought of them, as they are now, at this hour, "in those heavenly habitations, where the souls of them that sleep in the Lord Jesus enjoy perpetual rest and felicity," * gains indefinitely in life, in reality, in strength and glory, as we see them, through this narrow but bright "door in heaven" (Rev. v. 1), not resting only but serving also before their Lord, who has bought them for His use, and who holds them in His use quite as truly now as when we had the joy of their presence with us, and He was seen by us living and working in them and through them here.

True it is that the leading and essential character of their present state is rest, as that of their resurrection state will be action. But the two states overflow into each other. In one glorious passage the Apostle

* Visitation of the Sick (Prayer for a Sick Child).

describes the resurrection bliss as also "rest" (2 Thess. i. 7). And here we have it indicated that the heavenly intermediate rest is also service. What the precise nature of that service is we cannot tell. "Our knowledge of that life is small." Most certainly, "in vain our *fancy* strives to paint" its blessedness, both of repose and of occupation. This is part of our normal and God-chosen lot here, which is to "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. v. 7), οὐ διὰ εἴδους, "not by Object seen," not by objects seen. But blessed is the spiritual assistance in such a walk as we recollect, step by step, as we draw nearer to that happy assembly above, that, whatever be the manner and exercise of their holy life, it is life indeed; power, not weakness; service, not inaction. He who died and revived is Lord, not of us only, but of them.

But from this excursion into the sacred Unseen we must return. St Paul is intent now upon the believer's walk of loving large-heartedness in this life, not the next.

Ver. 10. **But you—why do you judge your brother?** (he takes up the verb, κρίνειν, used in his former appeal to the "weak," ver. 3). **Or you too** (he turns to the "strong"; see again ver. 3)—**why do you despise your brother? For we shall stand, all** of us, on one level, whatever were our mutual sentiments on earth, whatever claim we made here to sit as judges on our brethren, **before the tribunal** (βῆμα) **of** our (τοῦ) **God.***

Ver. 11. **For it stands written** (Isai. xlv. 23), "**As I live,** saith the Lord, sure it is as My eternal Being, **that to Me,** not to another, **shall bend every knee; and**

* So read, not τοῦ Χριστοῦ. It is significant meantime, as a testimony to the Apostle's view of his Master's Nature, that in 2 Cor. v. 10, a perfectly parallel passage, he writes, "we must all appear before the tribunal *of Christ*."

every tongue shall confess, shall ascribe all sovereignty, to God," not to the creature. **So then each of us,**
Ver. 12. about himself, not about the faults or errors of his brother, **shall give account to God.**

We have here, as in 2 Cor. v. 10, and again, under other imagery, in 1 Cor. iii. 11-15, a glimpse of that heart-searching prospect for the Christian, his summons hereafter, *as a Christian,* to the tribunal of his Lord. In all the three passages, and now particularly in this, the language, though it lends itself freely to the universal Assize, is limited by context, as to its direct purport, to the Master's *scrutiny of His own servants as such.* The question to be tried and decided (speaking after the manner of men) at His "tribunal," in this reference, is not that of glory or perdition; the persons of the examined are accepted; the enquiry is in the *domestic* court of the Palace, so to speak; it regards the award of the King as to the issues and value of His accepted servants' labour and conduct, as His representatives, in their mortal life. "The *Lord of the servants* cometh, and reckoneth *with them*" (Matt. xxv. 19). They have been justified by faith. They have been united to their glorious Head. They "shall be saved" (1 Cor. iii. 15), whatever be the fate of their "work." But what will their Lord say of their work? What have they done for Him, in labour, in witness, and above all *in character*? He will tell them what He thinks. He will be infinitely kind; but He will not flatter. And somehow, surely, —"it doth not yet appear" how, but somehow—eternity, even the eternity of salvation, will bear the impress of that award, the impress of *the past of service,* estimated by the King. "What shall the harvest be?"

And all this shall take place (this is the special emphasis of the prospect here) with a solemn individuality

of enquiry. "*Every one of us—for himself*—shall give account." We reflected, a little above, on the true place of "individualism" in the life of grace. We see here that there will indeed be a place for it in the experiences of eternity. The scrutiny of "the tribunal' will concern not the Society, the Organism, the total, but the member, the man. Each will stand in a solemn solitude there, before his divine Examiner. What *he* was, as the Lord's member, that will be the question. What *he* shall be, as such, in the functions of the endless state, that will be the result.

Let us not be troubled over that prospect with the trouble of the worldling, as if we did not know Him who will scrutinize us, and did not love Him. Around the thought of His "tribunal," in that aspect, there are cast no exterminating terrors. But it is a prospect fit to make grave and full of purpose the life which yet "is hid with Christ in God," and which is life indeed through grace. It is a deep reminder that the beloved Saviour is also, and in no figure of speech, but in an eternal earnest, THE MASTER too. We would not have Him not to be this. He would not be all He is to us as Saviour, were He not this also, and for ever.

St Paul hastens to further appeals, after this solemn forecast. And now all his stress is laid on the duty of the "strong" to use their "strength" not for self-assertion, not for even spiritual selfishness, but all for Christ, all for others, all in love.

Ver. 13. No more therefore let us judge one another; but judge, decide, this rather—not to set stumblingblock for our (τῷ) brother, or trap. I

Ver. 14. know—he instances his own experience and principle—and am sure, in the Lord Jesus, as one who is in union and communion with Him, seeing truth and

life from that view-point, **that nothing**, nothing of the sort in question, no food, no time, **is "unclean" of itself**; literally, "*by means of itself*," by any *inherent* mischief; **only, to the man who counts anything "unclean," to him it is unclean.** And therefore you, because you are not his conscience, must not tamper with his conscience. It is, in this case, mistaken; mistaken to his own loss, and to the loss of the Church. Yes, but what it wants is not your compulsion, but the Lord's light. If you can do so, bring that light to bear, in a testimony made impressive by holy love and unselfish considerateness. But dare not, for Christ's sake, compel a conscience. For conscience means the man's best actual sight of the law of right and wrong. It may be a dim and distorted sight; but it is his best at this moment. He cannot violate it without sin, nor can you bid him do so without yourself sinning. Conscience may not always see aright. But to transgress conscience is always wrong.

Ver. 15. **For***—the word takes up the argument at large, rather than the last detail of it—**if for food's sake your brother suffers pain,** the pain of a moral struggle between his present convictions and your commanding example, **you have given up walking** (οὐκέτι περιπατεῖς) **love-wise. Do not, with your food,** (there is a searching point in the "*your*," touching to the quick the deep selfishness of the action,) **work his ruin for whom Christ died.**

Such sentences are too intensely and tenderly in earnest to be called sarcastic; otherwise, how fine and keen an edge they carry! "*For food's sake!*" "*With your food!*" The man is shaken out of the sleep of

* Probably read γάρ not δέ.

what seemed an assertion of liberty, but was after all much rather a dull indulgence of—that is, a mere slavery to—himself. "I like this meat; I like this drink; I don't like the worry of these scruples; they interrupt me, they annoy me." Unhappy man! It is better to be the slave of scruples, than of self. In order to allow yourself another dish—you would slight an anxious friend's conscience, and, so far as your conduct is concerned, push him to a violation of it. But that means, a push on the slope which leans towards spiritual ruin. The way to perdition is paved with violated consciences. The Lord may counteract your action, and save your injured brother from himself—and you. But your action is, none the less, calculated for his perdition. And all the while this soul, for which, in comparison with your dull and narrow "liberty," you care so little, was so much cared for by the Lord that He—died for it.

Oh consecrating thought, attached now, for ever, for the Christian, to every human soul which he can influence: "*For whom Christ died!*"

Ver. 16. Do not therefore let your good, your glorious creed of holy liberty in Christ, be railed at, as only a thinly veiled self-indulgence after all; for the king-

Ver. 17. dom of our (*τοῦ*) God is not feeding (*βρῶσις*) and drinking; He does not claim a throne in your soul, and in your Society, merely to enlarge your bill of fare, to make it your sacred privilege, as an end in itself, to take what you please at table; but righteousness, surely here, in the Roman Epistle, the "righteousness" of our divine acceptance, and peace, the peace of perfect relations with Him in Christ, and joy in the Holy Spirit, the pure strong gladness of the justified, as in their sanctuary of salvation they drink the "living water,"

and "rejoice always in the Lord." For he who in
Ver. 18. this way * lives as bondservant to Christ, spending his spiritual talents not for himself but for his Master, is pleasing to his (τῷ) God, and is genuine to his fellow-men (τοῖς ἀνθρώποις). Yes, he *stands the test* (δόκιμος) of their keen scrutiny. They can soon detect the counterfeit under spiritual assertions which really assert self. But their conscience affirms the genuineness of a life of *unselfish* and happy holiness; that life "reverbs no hollowness."

Ver. 19. Accordingly therefore let us pursue the interests of peace, and the interests of an edification which is mutual; the "building up" (οἰκοδομὴ) which looks beyond the man to his brother, to his brethren, and tempers by that look even his plans for his own spiritual life.

Again he returns to the sorrowful *grotesque* of preferring personal comforts, and even the assertion of the principle of personal liberty, to the good of others.

Ver. 20. Do not for food's sake be undoing (κατάλυε) the work of our God. "All things are pure"; he doubtless quotes a watchword often heard; and it was truth itself in the abstract, but capable of becoming a fatal fallacy in practice; but anything is bad to the man who is brought by a stumblingblock to eat it.† Yes, this is bad (κακόν). What is good (καλὸν) in contrast?

Ver. 21. Good it is not to eat flesh, and not to drink wine (a word for our time and its conditions), and not to do anything in which your brother is stumbled,

* Read τούτῳ not τούτοις. Possibly the pronoun refers to "the Holy Spirit" (Πνεῦμα) just mentioned.

† Lit., "*who eats by means of a stumblingblock*"; the example, with its weight of "public opinion," being *the means of* overriding his conscience.

or entrapped, or weakened. Yes, this is Christian liberty; a liberation from the strong and subtle law of self; a freedom to live for others, independent of their evil, but the servant of their souls.

Ver. 22. You—the faith you have,* have it by yourself, in the presence of your God. You have believed; you are therefore in Christ; in Christ you are therefore free, by faith, from the preparatory restrictions of the past. Yes; but all this is not given you for personal display, but for divine communion. Its right issue is in a holy intimacy with your God, as in the confidence of your acceptance you know Him as your Father, "nothing between." But as regards human intercourse, you are emancipated not that you may disturb the neighbours with shouts of freedom and acts of licence, but that you may be at leisure to serve them in love. Happy the man who does not judge himself, who does not, in effect, decide against his own soul, in that which he approves, δοκιμάζει, pronounces satisfactory to conscience. Unhappy he who says to himself, "This is lawful," when the verdict is all the while purchased by self-love, or otherwise by the fear of man, and the soul knows in its depths that the thing is not as it should be. And the man who is

Ver. 23. doubtful, whose conscience is not really satisfied between the right and wrong of the matter, if he does eat, stands condemned in the court of his own heart, and of his aggrieved Lord's opinion, because it was not the result of faith; the action had not, for its basis, the holy conviction of the liberty of the justified. Now anything which is not the result of faith, is sin; that is to say, manifestly, "anything" *in such a case as this*;

* Probably read πίστιν ἣν ἔχεις, κατὰ κτλ.

any indulgence, any obedience to example, which the man, in a state of inward ambiguity, decides for on a principle other than that of his union with Christ by faith.

Thus the Apostle of Justification, and of the Holy Spirit, is the Apostle of Conscience too. He is as urgent upon the awful sacredness of our sense of right and wrong, as upon the offer and the security, in Christ, of peace with God, and the holy Indwelling, and the hope of glory. Let our steps reverently follow his, as we walk with God, and with men. Let us "rejoice in Christ Jesus," with a "joy" which is "in the Holy Ghost." Let us reverence duty, let us reverence conscience, in our own life, and also in the lives around us.

CHAPTER XXX

THE SAME SUBJECT: THE LORD'S EXAMPLE: HIS RELATION TO US ALL.

ROMANS XV. 1-13

THE large and searching treatment which the Apostle has already given to the right use of Christian Liberty, is yet not enough. He must pursue the same theme further; above all, that he may put it into more explicit contact with the Lord Himself.

We gather without doubt that the state of the Roman Mission, as it was reported to St Paul, gave special occasion for such fulness of discussion. It is more than likely, as we have seen from the first, that the bulk of the disciples were ex-pagans; probably of very various nationalities, many of them Orientals, and as such not more favourable to distinctive Jewish claims and tenets. It is also likely that they found amongst them, or beside them, many Christian Jews, or Christian Jewish proselytes, of a type more or less pronounced in their own direction; the school whose less worthy members supplied the men to whom St Paul, a few years later, writing from Rome to Philippi, refers as "preaching Christ of envy and strife" (Phil. i. 15). The temptation of a religious (as of a secular) majority is always to tyrannize, more or less, in matters of thought and practice. A dominant school, in any

age or region, too easily comes to talk and act as if all decided expression on the other side were an instance of "intolerance," while yet it allows itself in sufficiently severe and censorious courses of its own. At Rome, very probably, this mischief was in action. The "strong," with whose principle, in its true form, St Paul agreed, were disposed to domineer in spirit over the "weak," because the weak were comparatively the few. Thus they were guilty of a double fault; they were presenting a miserable parody of holy liberty, and they were acting off the line of that unselfish fairness which is essential in the Gospel character. For the sake not only of the peace of the great Mission Church, but of the honour of the Truth, and of the Lord, the Apostle therefore dwells on mutual duties, and returns to them again and again after apparent conclusions of his discourse. Let us listen as he now reverts to the subject, to set it more fully than ever in the light of Christ.

Ver. 1. But (it is the "*but*" of resumption, and of new material) we are bound, we the able, *οἱ δυνατοὶ* (perhaps a sort of soubriquet for themselves among the school of "liberty," "*the capables*")—to bear the weaknesses of the unable, (again, possibly, a soubriquet, and in this case an unkindly one, for a school,)

Ver. 2. and not to please ourselves. Each one of us, let him please not himself but his neighbour, as regards what is good, with a view to edification.

"*Please*"; *ἀρέσκειν, ἀρεσκέτω*. The word is one often "soiled with ignoble use," in classical literature; it tends to mean the "*pleasing*" which fawns and flatters; the complaisance of the parasite. But it is lifted by Christian usage to a noble level. The cowardly and interested element drops out of it; the thought of willingness to do *anything to please* remains; only

limited by the law of right, and aimed only at the other's "good." Thus purified, it is used elsewhere of that holy "complaisance" in which the grateful disciple aims to "meet half way the wishes" of his LORD (see Col. i. 10). Here, it is the unselfish and watchful aim to meet half way, if possible, the thought and feeling of a fellow-disciple, to conciliate by sympathetic attentions, to be considerate in the smallest matters of opinion and conduct; a genuine exercise of inward liberty.*

There is a gulph of difference between interested timidity and disinterested considerateness. In flight from the former, the ardent Christian sometimes breaks the rule of the latter. St Paul is at his hand to warn him not to forget the great law of love. And THE LORD is at his hand too, with His own supreme Example.

Ver. 3. **For even our (ὁ) Christ did not please Himself; but, as it stands written (Psal. lxix. 9), "The reproaches of those who reproached Thee, fell upon Me."**

It is the first mention in the Epistle of the Lord's Example. His Person we have seen, and the Atoning Work, and the Resurrection Power, and the great Return. The holy Example can never take the place of any one of these facts of life eternal. But when they are secure, then the reverent study of the Example is not only in place; it is of urgent and immeasurable importance.

"*He did not please Himself.*" "Not My will, but Thine, be done." Perhaps the thought of the Apostle is dwelling on the very hour when those words were spoken, from beneath the olives of the Garden, and out of a depth of inward conflict and surrender which

* Observe that St Paul utterly repudiates the thought of "*pleasing*" (ἀρέσκειν) where it means a *servile and really compromising* deference to human opinion (Gal. i. 10).

"it hath not entered into the heart of man"—except the heart of the Man of men Himself—"to conceive." Then indeed "He did not please Himself." From pain as pain, from grief as grief, all sentient existence naturally, necessarily, shrinks; it "pleases itself" in escape or in relief. The infinitely refined sentient Existence of the Son of Man was no exception to this law of universal nature; and now He was called to such pain, to such grief, as never before met upon one head. We read the record of Gethsemane, and its sacred horror is always new; the disciple passes in thought out of the Garden even to the cruel tribunal of the Priest with a sense of relief; his Lord has risen from the unfathomable to the fathomable depth of His woes —till He goes down again, at noon next day, upon the Cross. "He pleased not Himself." He who soon after, on the shore of the quiet water, said to Peter, in view of his glorious and God-glorifying end, "They shall carry thee *whither thou wouldest not*"—along a path from which all thy manhood shall shrink—He too, as to His Human sensibility, "would not" go to His own unknown agonies. But then, blessed be His Name, "He would go" to them, from that other side, the side of the infinite harmony of His purpose with the purpose of His Father, in His immeasurable desire of His Father's glory. So He "drank that cup," which shall never now pass on to His people. And then He went forth into the house of Caiaphas, to be "reproached," during some six or seven terrible hours, by men who, professing zeal for God, were all the while blaspheming Him by every act and word of malice and untruth against His Son; and from Caiaphas He went to Pilate, and to Herod, and to the Cross, "bearing that reproach."

"I'm not anxious to die easy, when He died hard!" So said, not long ago, in a London attic, lying crippled and comfortless, a little disciple of the Man of Sorrows. He had "seen the Lord," in a strangely unlikely conversion, and had found a way of serving Him; it was to drop written fragments of His Word from the window on to the pavement below. And for this silent mission he would have no liberty if he were moved, in his last weeks, to a comfortable "Home." So he would rather serve his beloved Redeemer thus, "pleasing not himself," than be soothed in body, and gladdened by surrounding kindness, but with less "fellowship of His sufferings." Illustrious confessor —sure to be remembered when "the Lord of the servants cometh"! And with what an *a fortiori* does his simple answer to a kindly visitor's offer bring home to us (for it is for us as much as for the Romans) this appeal of the Apostle's! We are called in these words not necessarily to any agony of body or spirit; not necessarily even to an act of severe moral courage; only to patience, largeness of heart, brotherly love. Shall we not answer *Amen* from the soul? Shall not even one thought of "the fellowship of His sufferings" annihilate in us the miserable "self-pleasing" which shews itself in religious bitterness, in the refusal to attend and to understand, in a censoriousness which has nothing to do with firmness, in a personal attitude exactly opposite to love?

He has cited Psalm lxix. as a Scripture which, with all the solemn problems gathered round its dark "minatory" paragraph, yet lives and moves with Christ, the Christ of love. And now—not to confirm his application of the Psalm, for he takes that for granted—but to affirm the positive Christian use of the

Old Scriptures as a whole, he goes on to speak at large of "the things fore-written." He does so with the special thought that the Old Testament is full of truth in point for the Roman Church just now; full of the bright, *and uniting*, "*hope*" of glory; full of examples as well as precepts for "*patience*," that is to say, holy perseverance under trial; full finally of the Lord's equally gracious relation to "the Nations" and to Israel.

Ver. 4. For all the things fore-written, written in the Scriptures of the elder time, in the age that both preceded the Gospel and prepared for it, for our instruction were written—with an emphasis upon "*our*" —that through the patience and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might hold our (*τὴν*) hope, the hope "sure and steadfast" of glorification in the glory of our conquering Lord. That is to say, the true "Author behind the authors" of that mysterious Book watched, guided, effected its construction, from end to end, with the purpose full in His view of instructing for all time the developed Church of Christ. And in particular, He adjusted thus the Old Testament records and precepts of "*patience*," the patience which "suffers *and is strong*," suffers and *goes forward*,* and of "*encouragement*," *παράκλησις*, the word which is more than "*consolation*," while it includes it; for it means the voice of positive and enlivening appeal. Rich indeed are Pentateuch, and Prophets, and Hagiographa, alike in commands to persevere and be of good courage, and in examples of men who were made brave and patient by the power of God in them, as they took Him at His word. And all this, says the Apostle, was on purpose,

* The noble word *ὑπομονή*, as we have remarked already, is rarely if ever *merely* passive in New Testament usage.

on God's purpose. That multifarious Book is indeed in this sense one. Not only is it, in its Author's intention, full of Christ; in the same intention it is full of Him for us. Immortal indeed is its preciousness, if this was His design. Confidently may we explore its pages, looking in them first for Christ, then for ourselves, in our need of peace, and strength, and hope.

Let us add one word, in view of the anxious controversy of our day, within the Church, over the structure and nature of those "divine Scriptures," as the Christian Fathers love to call them. The use of the Holy Book in the spirit of this verse, the persistent searching of it for the preceptive mind of God in it, with the belief that it was "written for our instruction," will be the surest and deepest means to give us "perseverance" and "encouragement" about the Book itself. The more we really *know* the Bible, at first hand, before God, with the knowledge both of acquaintance and reverent sympathy, the more shall we be able with intelligent spiritual conviction, to "*persist*" and "*be of good cheer*" in the conviction that it is indeed not of man, (though through man,) but of God. The more shall we use it as the Lord and the Apostles used it, as being not only of God, but of God for us; His Word, and for us. The more shall we make it our divine daily Manual for a life of patient and cheerful sympathies, holy fidelity, and "that blessed Hope"—which draws "nearer now than when we believed."

Ver. 5. **But may the God of the patience and the encouragement**, He who is Author and Giver of the graces unfolded in His Word, He without whom even that Word is but a sound without significance in the soul, **grant you**, in His own sovereign way of acting **on** and in human wills and affections, **to be of one**

mind mutually (ἐν ἀλλήλοις), according to Christ Jesus; "*Christwise*," in His steps, in His temper, under His precepts; having towards one another, not necessarily an identity of opinion on all details, but a community of sympathetic kindness. No comment here is better than this same Writer's later words, from Rome (Phil. ii. 2-5); "Be of one mind; having the same love; nothing by strife, or vainglory; esteeming others better than yourselves; looking on the things of others; with the same mind which was also in Christ Jesus," when He humbled Himself for us. And all this, not only for the comfort of the community, but for the glory of God: that unanimously, with one mouth, you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; turning from the sorrowful friction worked by self-will when it intrudes into the things of heaven, to an antidote, holy and effectual, found in adoring Him who is equally near to all His true people, in His Son.

Ver. 6.

Wherefore welcome one another into fellowship, even as our (ὁ) Christ welcomed you,* all the individuals of your company, and all the groups of it, to our (τοῦ) God's glory. These last words may mean either that the Lord's welcome of "*you*" "*glorified*" His Father's grace; or that that grace will be "*glorified*" by the holy victory of love over prejudice among the Roman saints. Perhaps this latter explanation is to be preferred, as it echoes and enforces the last words of the previous verse. But why should not both references reside in the one phrase, where the actions of the Lord and His disciples are seen in their deep harmony?

Ver. 7.

* So read, not ἡμᾶς. The point of the mention here of "*you*" is manifest.

For * I say that Christ stands constituted † Servant
Ver. 8. (διάκονον) of the Circumcision, Minister of divine blessings to Israel, on behalf of God's truth, so as to ratify in act the promises belonging to the Fathers, so as to secure and vindicate their fulfilment, by His
Ver. 9. coming as Son of David, Son of Abraham; but (a "*but*" which, by its slight correction, reminds the Jew that the Promise, given wholly *through* him, was not given wholly *for* him) so that the Nations, on mercy's behalf, should glorify God, blessing and adoring Him on account of a salvation which, in their case, was less of "*truth*" than of "*mercy*," because it was less explicitly and immediately of covenant; as it stands written (Psal. xviii. 49), "For this I will confess to Thee, will own Thee, among the Nations, and will strike the harp (ψαλῶ) to Thy Name"; Messiah confessing His Eternal Father's glory in the midst of His redeemed Gentile subjects, who sing their "lower part" with Him. And again it, the Scripture, says,
Ver. 10. (Deut. xxxii. 43), "Be jubilant, Nations, with His people."‡ And again (Psal. cxvii. 1),
Ver. 11. "Praise the Lord, all the Nations, and let all the peoples praise Him again" (ἐπαινεσάτωσαν). And again Isaiah says (xi. 10), "There shall come
Ver. 12. (literally, "*shall be*") the Root of Jesse, and He who rises up—"*rises*," in the present tense of the

* Reading γὰρ not δέ, and omitting Ἰησοῦν just afterwards.

† Γεγενῆσθαι, the perfect. But perhaps read γενέσθαι.

‡ In the received Hebrew Text the word אֵת, "*with*," is absent, and the rendering may be, in paraphrase, either, "*Ye Nations, congratulate His people*," or "*Rejoice ye Nations, who are His people.*" Either the great Rabbi-Apostle read אֵת, or he gave the essence of the Mosaic words, not their form, (using the Lxx. rendering as his form,) to convey the thought of the loving sympathy, before God, of Israel and the Nations.

divine decree—to rule (the) Nations; on Him (the) Nations shall hope; with the hope which is in fact faith, looking from the sure present to the promised future. Now may the God of that hope, τῆς ἐλπίδος, "*the* Hope" just cited from the Prophet, the expectation of all blessing, up to its crown and flower in glory, on the basis of Messiah's work, fill you with all joy and peace in your (τῷ) believing, so that you may overflow in that (τῇ) hope, in the Holy Spirit's power; "*in* His power," clasped as it were within His divine embrace, and thus energized to look upward, heavenward, away from embittering and dividing temptations to the unifying as well as beatifying prospect of your Lord's Return.

Ver. 13.

He closes here his long, wise, tender appeal and counsel about the "unhappy divisions" of the Roman Mission. He has led his readers as it were all round the subject. With the utmost tact, and also candour, he has given them his own mind, "in the Lord," on the matter in dispute. He has pointed out to the party of scruple and restriction the fallacy of claiming the function of Christ, and asserting a divine rule where He has not imposed one. He has addressed the "strong," (with whom he agrees in a certain sense,) at much greater length, reminding them of the moral error of making more of any given application of their principle than of the law of love in which the principle was rooted. He has brought both parties to the feet of Jesus Christ as absolute Master. He has led them to gaze on Him as their blessed Example, in His infinite self-oblivion for the cause of God, and of love. He has poured out before them the prophecies, which tell at once the Christian Judaist and the ex-pagan convert

that in the eternal purpose Christ was given equally to both, in the line of "truth," in the line of "mercy." Now lastly he clasps them impartially to his own heart in this precious and pregnant benediction, beseeching for both sides, and for all their individuals, a wonderful fulness of those blessings in which most speedily and most surely *the spirit* of their strife would expire. Let that prayer be granted, in its pure depth and height, and how could "the weak brother" look with quite his old anxiety on the problems suggested by the dishes at a meal, and by the dates of the Rabbinic Calendar? And how could "the capable" bear any longer to lose his joy in God by an assertion, full of self, of his own insight and "liberty"? Profoundly happy and at rest in their Lord, whom they embraced by faith as their Righteousness and Life, and whom they anticipated in hope as their coming Glory; filled through their whole consciousness, by the indwelling Spirit, with a new insight into CHRIST; they would fall into each other's embrace, in Him. They would be much more ready, when they met, to speak "concerning the King" than to begin a new stage of their not very elevating discussion.

How many a Church controversy, now as then, would die of inanition, leaving room for a living truth, if the disputants could only *gravitate*, as to their always most beloved theme, to the praises and glories of their redeeming LORD Himself! It is at His feet, and in His arms, that we best understand both His truth, and the thoughts, rightful or mistaken, of our brethren.

Meanwhile, let us take this benedictory prayer, as we may take it, from its instructive context, and carry it out with us into all the contexts of life. What the Apostle prayed for the Romans, in view of their con-

troversies, he prays for us, as for them, in view of everything. Let us "stand back and look at the picture." Here—conveyed in this strong petition—is St Paul's idea of the true Christian's true life, and the true life of the true Church. What are the elements, and what is the result?

It is a life lived in direct contact with God. "Now *the God of hope* fill you." He remits them here (as above, ver. 5) from even himself to the Living God. In a sense, he sends them even from "the things forewritten," to the Living God; not in the least to disparage the Scriptures, but because the great function of the divine Word, as of the divine Ordinances, is to guide the soul into *an immediate* intercourse with the Lord God in His Son, and to secure it therein. God is to deal direct with the Romans. He is to manipulate, He is to fill, their being.

It is a life not starved or straitened, but full. "The God of hope *fill you*." The disciple, and the Church, is not to live as if grace were like a stream "in the year of drought," now settled into an almost stagnant deep, then struggling with difficulty over the stones of the shallow. The man, and the Society, are to live and work in tranquil but moving strength, "rich" in the fruits of their Lord's "poverty" (2 Cor. viii. 9); filled out of His fulness; never, spiritually, at a loss for Him; never, practically, having to do or bear except in His large and gracious power.

It is a life bright and beautiful; "filled with *all joy and peace*." It is to shew a surface fair with the reflected sky of Christ, Christ present, Christ to come. A sacred while open happiness and a pure internal repose is to be there, born of "His presence, in which is fulness of joy," and of the sure prospect of His

Return, bringing with it "pleasures for evermore." Like that mysterious ether of which the natural philosopher tells us, this joy, this peace, found and maintained "in the Lord," is to pervade *all* the contents of the Christian life, its moving masses of duty or trial, its interspaces of rest or silence; not always demonstrative but always underlying, and always a living power.

It is a life of faith; "all joy and peace *in your believing*." That is to say, it is a life dependent for its all upon a Person and His promises. Its glad certainty of peace with God, of the possession of His Righteousness, is by means not of sensations and experiences, but of believing; it comes, and stays, by taking Christ at His word. Its power over temptation, its "victory and triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh," is by the same means. The man, the Church, takes the Lord at His word;—"I am with you always"; "Through Me thou shalt do valiantly";—and faith, that is to say, Christ trusted in practice, is "more than conqueror."

It is a life overflowing with the heavenly hope; "that ye may abound *in the hope*." Sure of the past, and of the present, it is—what out of Christ no life can be—sure of the future. The golden age, for this happy life, is in front, and is no Utopia. "Now is our salvation nearer"; "We look for that blissful (μακαρίαν) hope, the appearing of our great God and Saviour"; "Them which sleep in Him God will bring with Him"; "We shall be caught up together with them; we shall ever be with the Lord"; "They shall see His face; thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.'

And all this it is as a life lived "*in the power of the Holy Ghost*." Not by enthusiasm, not by any stimulus

which self applies to self; not by resources for gladness and permanence found in independent reason or affection; but by the almighty, all-tender power of the Comforter. "The Lord, the Life-Giver," giving life by bringing us to the Son of God, and uniting us to Him, is the Giver and strong Sustainer of the faith, and so of the peace, the joy, the hope, of this blessed life.

"Now it was not written for their sakes only, but for us also," in our circumstances of personal and of common experience. Large and pregnant is the application of this one utterance to the problems perpetually raised by the divided state of organization, and of opinion, in modern Christendom. It gives us one secret, above and below all others, as the sure panacea, if it may but be allowed to work, for this multifarious malady which all who think deplore. That secret is "the secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear Him" (Psal. xxv. 14). It is a fuller life in the individual, and so in the community, of the peace and joy of believing; a larger abundance of "that blessed hope," given by that power for which numberless hearts are learning to thirst with a new intensity, "the power of the Holy Ghost."

It was in that direction above all that the Apostle gazed as he yearned for the unity, not only spiritual but practical, of the Roman saints. This great master of order, this man made for government, alive with all his large wisdom to the sacred importance, in its true place, of the external mechanism of Christianity, yet makes no mention of it here, nay, scarcely gives one allusion to it in the whole Epistle. The word "Church" is not heard till the final chapter; and then it is used only, or almost only, of the scattered mission-stations, or even mission-*groups*, in their individuality.

The ordered Ministry only twice, and in the most passing manner, comes into the long discourse; in the words (xii. 6-8) about prophecy, ministration, teaching, exhortation, leadership; and in the mention (xvi. 1) of Phœbe's relation to the Cenchrean Church. He is addressing the saints of that great City which was afterwards, in the tract of time, to develop into even terrific exaggerations the idea of Church Order. But he has practically nothing to say to them about unification and cohesion beyond this appeal to hold fast together by drawing nearer each and all to the Lord, and so filling each one his soul and life with Him.

Our modern problems must be met with attention, with firmness, with practical purpose, with due regard to history, and with submission to revealed truth. But if they are to be solved indeed they must be met outside the spirit of self, and in the communion of the Christian with Christ, by the power of the Spirit of God.

CHAPTER XXXI

ROMAN CHRISTIANITY: ST PAUL'S COMMISSION: HIS INTENDED ITINERARY: HE ASKS FOR PRAYER

ROMANS xv. 14-33

THE Epistle hastens to its close. As to its instructions, doctrinal or moral, they are now practically written. The Way of Salvation lies extended, in its radiant outline, before the Romans, and ourselves. The Way of Obedience, in some of its main tracks, has been drawn firmly on the field of life. Little remains but the Missionary's last words about persons and plans, and then the great task is done.

He will say a warm, gracious word about the spiritual state of the Roman believers. He will justify, with a noble courtesy, his own authoritative attitude as their counsellor. He will talk a little of his hoped for and now seemingly approaching visit, and matters in connexion with it. He will greet the individuals whom he knows, and commend the bearer of the Letter, and add last messages from his friends. Then Phœbe may receive her charge, and go on her way.

Ver. 14. But I am sure, my brethren, quite on my own part (*καὶ αὐτὸς ἐγώ*), about you, that you are, yourselves, irrespective of my influence, brimming with goodness, with high Christian qualities in general, filled with all knowledge, competent in fact (*καὶ*) to admonish

one another. Is this flattery, interested and insincere? Is it weakness, easily persuaded into a false optimism? Surely not; for the speaker here is the man who has spoken straight to the souls of these same people about sin, and judgment, and holiness; about the holiness of these everyday charities which some of them (so he has said plainly enough) had been violating. But a truly great heart always loves to praise where it can, and, discerningly, to think and say the best. He who is Truth itself said of His imperfect, His disappointing followers, as He spoke of them in their hearing to His Father, "They have kept Thy word"; "I am glorified in them" (John xvii. 6, 10). So here his Servant does not indeed give the Romans a formal certificate of perfection, but he does rejoice to know, and to say, that their community is Christian in a high degree, and that in a certain sense they have not needed information about Justification by Faith, nor about principles of love and liberty in their intercourse. In essence, all has been in their cognizance already; an assurance which could not have been entertained in regard of every Mission, certainly. He has written not as to children, giving them an alphabet, but as to men, developing facts into science.

Ver. 15. But with a certain boldness (τολμηρότερον) I have written* to you, here and there,† just as reminding you; because of the grace, the free gift of his

Ver. 16. commission and of the equipment for it, given me by our (τοῦ) God, given in order to my being Christ Jesus' minister sent to the Nations, doing priest-work with the Gospel of God, that the oblation of the Nations,

* Ἔγραψα: the epistolary aorist.

† Ἀπὸ μέρους "*as regards part*" of his instructions and cautions. He probably refers particularly to the discussions of ch. xiv. 1—xv. 13.

the oblation which is in fact the Nations self-laid upon the spiritual altar, may be acceptable, consecrated in the Holy Spirit. It is a startling and splendid passage of metaphor. Here once, in all the range of his writings (unless we except the few and affecting words of Phil. ii. 17), the Apostle presents himself to his converts as a sacrificial ministrant, a "*priest*" in the sense which usage (not etymology) has so long stamped on that English word as its more special sense. Never do the great Founders of the Church, and never does He who is its Foundation, use the term ἱερεύς, sacrificing, mediating, priest, as a term to designate the Christian minister in any of his orders; *never*, if this passage is not to be reckoned in, with its ἱερουργεῖν, its "*priest-work*," as we have ventured to translate the Greek. In the distinctively sacerdotal Epistle, the Hebrews, the word ἱερεὺς comes indeed into the foreground. But there it is absorbed into THE LORD. It is appropriated altogether to Him in His self-sacrificial Work once done, and in His heavenly Work now always doing, the work of mediatorial impartation, from His throne,* of the blessings which His great Offering won. One other Christian application of the sacrificial title we have in the Epistles: "Ye are a holy priesthood," "a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9). But who are "*ye*"? Not the consecrated pastorate, but the consecrated Christian company altogether. And what are the altar-sacrifices of that company? "Sacrifices *spiritual*"; "*the praises* of Him who called them into His wonderful light" (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9). In the Christian Church, the pre-Levitical ideal of the old Israel reappears in its sacred

* He is seen in the Epistle not before the throne, standing, but *on* the throne, *seated*.

reality. He who offered to the Church of Moses (Exod. xix. 6) to be one great priesthood, "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation," found His favoured nation unready for the privilege, and so Levi representatively took the place alone. But now, in His new Israel, as all are sons in the Son, so all are priests in the Priest. And the sacred Ministry of that Israel, the Ministry which is His own divine institution, the gift (Eph. iv. 11) of the ascended Lord to His Church, is never once designated, as such, by the term which would have marked it as the analogue to Levi, or to Aaron.

Is this passage in any degree an exception? No; for it contains its own full inner evidence of its metaphorical cast. The "*priest-working*" here has regard, we find, not to a ritual, but to "*the Gospel.*" "*The oblation*" is —the Nations. The hallowing Element, shed as it were upon the victims, is the Holy Ghost. Not in a material temple, and serving at no tangible altar, the Apostle brings his multitudinous *converts* as his holocaust to the Lord. The Spirit, at his preaching and on their believing, descends upon them; and they lay themselves "a living sacrifice" where the fire of love shall consume them, to His glory.

Ver. 17. I have therefore my (read τὴν) right to exultation, in Christ Jesus, as His member and implement, as to what regards God; not in any respect as regards myself, apart from Him. And then he proceeds as if about to say, in evidence of that assertion, that he always declines to intrude on a brother Apostle's ground, and to claim as his own experience what was in the least degree another's; but that indeed through him, in sovereign grace, God *has* done great things, far and wide. This he expresses thus, in energetic compressions of diction:

For I will not dare to talk at all of things which
Ver. 18. **Christ did not work out through me,** (there is an emphasis on "*me*,") **to effect obedience of (the)**
Ver. 19. **Nations to His Gospel, by word and deed, in power of signs and wonders, in power of God's Spirit**; a reference, strangely impressive by its very passingness, to the exercise of miracle-working gifts by the writer. This man, so strong in thought, so practical in counsel, so extremely unlikely to have been under an illusion about a large factor in his adult and intensely conscious experience, speaks direct from himself of his wonder-works. And the allusion, thus dropped by the way and left behind, is itself an evidence to the perfect mental balance of the witness; this was no enthusiast, intoxicated with ambitious spiritual visions, but a man put in trust with a
Ver. 19. mysterious yet sober treasure. **So that from Jerusalem, and round about** it (Acts xxvi. 20), **as far as the Illyrian** region, the highland seabord which looks across the Adriatic to the long eastern side of Italy, **I have fulfilled the Gospel of Christ,** carried it practically everywhere, *satisfied the idea* of so distributing it that it shall be accessible everywhere to the native races.

Ver. 20. **But** this I have done **with this ambition, to preach the Gospel not where Christ was already named, that I might not build on another man's foun-**
Ver. 12. **dation**; **but to act on the divine word, as it stands written** (Isai. lii. 15), "**They to whom no news was carried about Him, shall see; and those who have not heard, shall understand.**" Here was an "*ambition*" as far-sighted as it was noble. Would that the principle of it could have been better remembered in the history of Christendom, and not least in our own

age; a wasteful over-lapping of effort on effort, system on system, would not need now to be so much deplored.

Ver. 22. Thus as a fact (*καὶ*) I was hindered for the most part—hindrances were the rule, signals of opportunity the exception—in coming to you; you, whose City is no untrodden ground to messengers

Ver. 23. of Christ, and therefore not the ground which had *a first* claim on me. But now, as no longer having place in these regions, eastern Roman Europe yielding him no longer an unattempted and accessible district to enter, and having a home-sick feeling (*ἐπιποθίαν*: see above, i. 11) for coming to you, these

Ver. 24. many years—whenever I may be journeying to Spain, [I will come to you*]. For I hope, on my journey through, to see the sight of you (*θεάσασθαι*, as if the view of so important a Church would be a *spectacle* indeed), and by you † to be escorted there, if first I may have my fill of you, however imperfectly (*ἀπὸ μέρους*).

As always, in the fine courtesy of pastoral love, he says more, and thinks more, of his own expected gain of refreshment and encouragement from them, than even of what he may have to impart to them. So he had thought, and so spoken, in his opening page (i. 11, 12); it is the same heart throughout.

How little did he realize the line and details of the destined fulfilment of that "home-sick feeling"! He was indeed to "see Rome," and for no passing "sight of the scene." For two long years of sorrows and joys, restraints and wonderful occasions, innumerable colloquies, and the writing of great Scriptures, he was

* These words have weak documentary support. But surely the ellipsis left by their absence is difficult to accept, even in St Paul's free style.

† Or perhaps "*from you*," *ἀφ' ὑμῶν*.

to "dwell in his own hired lodgings" there. But he did not see what lay between.

For St Paul ordinarily, as always for us, it was true that "we know not what awaits us." For us, as for him, it is better "to walk with God in the dark, than to go alone in the light."

Did he ultimately visit Spain? We shall never know until perhaps we are permitted to ask him hereafter. It is not at all impossible that, released from his Roman prison, he first went westward and then—as at some time he certainly did—travelled to the Levant. But no tradition, however faint, connects St Paul with the great Peninsula which glories in her legend of St James. Is it irrelevant to remember that *in his Gospel* he has notably visited Spain in later ages? It was the Gospel of St Paul, the simple grandeur of his exposition of Justification by Faith, which in the sixteenth century laid hold on multitudes of the noblest of Spanish hearts, till it seemed as if not Germany, not England, bid fairer to become again a land of "truth in the light." The terrible Inquisition utterly crushed the springing harvest, at Valladolid, at Seville, and in that ghastly Quemadero at Madrid, which, five-and-twenty years ago, was excavated by accident, to reveal its deep strata of ashes, and charred bones, and all the débris of the *Autos*. But now again, in the mercy of God, and in happier hours, the New Testament is read in the towns of Spain, and in her highland villages, and churches are gathering around the holy light, spiritual descendants of the true, the primeval, Church of Rome. May "the God of hope fill them with all peace and joy in believing."

Ver. 25. **But now I am journeying to Jerusalem,** the journey whose course we know so well from Acts **xx., xxi., ministering to the saints, serving the**

poor converts of the holy City as the collector and
Ver. 26. conveyer of alms for their necessities. **For Macedonia and Achaia**, the northern and southern Provinces of Roman Greece, finely *personified* in this vivid passage, **thought good to make something of a** (*τινὰ*) **communication**, a certain gift to be "*shared*" among the recipients, **for the poor of the saints who live at Jerusalem**; the place where poverty seemed specially, for whatever reason, to beset the converts. "**For**
Ver. 27. **they thought good!**"—yes; but there is a different side to the matter. Macedonia and Achaia are generous friends, but they have an obligation too: **And debtors they are to them**, to these poor people of the old City. **For if in their spiritual things the Nations shared, they**, these Nations, **are in debt, as a fact**, (*καί*,) **in things carnal**, things belonging to our "life in the flesh," **to minister to them**; *λειτουργῆσαι*, to do them public *and religious* service.

Ver. 28. **When I have finished this then, and sealed this fruit to them**, put them into ratified ownership of this "*proceed*" (*καρπὸν*) of Christian love, **I will come away by your road** (*δι' ὑμῶν*) **to Spain**. (He *means*, "if the Lord will"; it is instructive to note that even St Paul does not make it a duty, with an almost superstitious iteration, always to *say so*). Now
Ver. 29. **I know** that, coming to you, **in the fulness of Christ's benediction*** I shall come. He will come with his Lord's "*benediction*" on him, as His messenger to the Roman disciples; Christ will send him charged with heavenly messages, and attended with His own prospering presence. And this will be "*in fulness*"; with

* Omitting the words *τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ*.

a rich overflow of saving truth, and heavenly power, and blissful fellowship.

Here he pauses, to ask them for that boon of which he is so covetous—intercessory prayer. He has been speaking with a kind and even sprightly pleasantry (there is no irreverence in the recognition) of those Personages, Macedonia and Achaia, and their gift, which is also their debt. He has spoken also of what we know from elsewhere (1 Cor. xvi. 1-4) to have been his own scrupulous purpose not only to collect the alms but to see them punctually delivered, above all suspicion of misuse. He has talked with cheerful confidence of "the road by Rome to Spain." But now he realizes what the visit to Jerusalem involves for himself. He has tasted in many places, and at many times, the bitter hatred felt for him in unbelieving Israel; a hatred the more bitter, probably, the more his astonishing activity and influence were felt in region after region. Now he is going to the central focus of the enmity; to the City of the Sanhedrin, and of the Zealots. And St Paul is no Stoic, indifferent to fear, lifted in an unnatural exaltation above circumstances, though he is ready to walk through them in the power of Christ. His heart anticipates the experiences of outrage and revilings, and the possible breaking up of all his missionary plans. He thinks too of prejudice within the Church, as well as of hatred from without; he is not at all sure that his cherished collection will not be coldly received, or even rejected, by the Judaists of the mother-church; whom yet he must and will call "saints." So he tells all to the Romans, with a generous and winning confidence in their sympathy, and begs their prayers, and above all sets them praying that he may not be disappointed of his longed-for visit to them.

All was granted. He was welcomed by the Church. He was delivered from the fanatics, by the strong arm of the Empire. He did reach Rome, and he had holy joy there. Only, the Lord took His own way, a way they knew not, to answer Paul and his friends.

Ver. 30. **But I appeal to you, brethren,**—the "*but*" carries an implication that something lay in the way of the happy prospect just mentioned,—**by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit,** by that holy family affection inspired by the Holy One into the hearts which He has regenerated,* **to wrestle along**

Ver. 31. **with me in your prayers on my behalf to our** (τῷ) **God; that I may be rescued from those who disobey** the Gospel in Judea, **and that my ministration** † **which takes me to Jerusalem** (ἡ εἰς Ἰερουσαλὴμ) **may prove acceptable to the saints,** may be taken by the Christians there without prejudice, and in love; **that I**

Ver. 32. **may with joy come to you, through the will of God,** ‡ **and may share refreshing rest with you,** the rest of holy fellowship where the tension of discussion and opposition is intermitted, and the two parties perfectly "understand one another" in their

Ver. 33. Lord. **But the God of our** (τῆς) **peace be with you all.** Yes, so be it, whether or no the longed-for "*joy*" and "*refreshing rest*" is granted in His providence to the Apostle. With his beloved Romans, anywise, let there be "*peace*"; peace in their community, and in their souls; peace with God, and peace in Him. And so it will be, whether their human

* So we explain, rather than take the reference to be to the Holy Spirit's *love for us*. In this context, surely, this latter would be less in point.

† Διακονία: another possible reading is ἠωροφορία, "*gift-bearing*"

‡ Perhaps read, "*through the will of the Lord Jesus.*"

friend is or is not permitted, to see them, if only the Eternal Friend is there.

There is a deep and attractive tenderness, as we have seen above, in this paragraph, where the writer's heart tells the readers quite freely of its personal misgivings and longings. One of the most pathetic, sometimes one of the most beautiful, phenomena of human life is the strong man in his weak hour, or rather in his feeling hour, when he is glad of the support of those who may be so much his weaker. There is a sort of strength which prides itself upon never shewing such symptoms; to which it is a point of honour to act and speak always as if the man were self-contained and self-sufficient. But this is a narrow type of strength, not a great one. The strong man truly great is not afraid, in season, to "let himself go"; he is well able to recover. An underlying power leaves him at leisure to shew upon the surface very much of what he feels. The largeness of his insight puts him into manifold contact with others, and keeps him open to their sympathies, however humble and inadequate these sympathies may be. The Lord Himself, "mighty to save," cared more than we can fully know for human fellow-feeling. "Will ye also go away?" "Ye are they that have continued with Me in My temptations"; "Tarry ye here, and watch with Me"; "Lovest thou Me?"

No false spiritual pride suggests it to St Paul to conceal his anxieties from the Romans. It is a temptation sometimes to those who have been called to help and strengthen other men, to affect for themselves a strength which perhaps they do not quite feel. It is well meant. The man is afraid that if he owns to a burthen he may seem to belie the Gospel of

"perfect peace"; that if he even lets it be suspected that he is not always in the ideal Christian frame, his warmest exhortations and testimonies may lose their power. But at all possible hazards let him, about such things as about all others, tell the truth. It is a sacred duty in itself; the heavenly Gospel has no corner in it for the manœuvres of spiritual prevarication. And he will find assuredly that truthfulness, transparent candour, will not really discount his witness to the promises of his Lord. It may humiliate *him*, but it will not discredit Jesus Christ. It will indicate the imperfection of the recipient, but not any defect in the thing received. And the fact that the witness has been found quite candid against himself, where there is occasion, will give a double weight to his every direct testimony to the possibility of a life lived in the hourly peace of God.

It is no part of our Christian duty to feel doubts and fears! And the more we act upon our Lord's promises as they stand, the more we shall rejoice to find that misgivings tend to vanish where once they were always thickening upon us. Only, it is our duty always to be transparently honest.

However, we must not treat this theme here too much as if St Paul had given us an unmistakable text for it. His words now before us *express* no "carking care" about his intended visit to Jerusalem. They only indicate a deep sense of the gravity of the prospect, and of its dangers. And we know from elsewhere (see especially Acts xxi. 13) that that sense did sometimes amount to an agony of feeling, in the course of the very journey which he now contemplates. And we see him here quite without the wish to conceal his heart in the matter.

In closing we note, "for our learning," his example as he is a man who craves to be prayed for. Prayer, that great mystery, that blessed fact and power, was indeed vital to St Paul. He is always praying himself; he is always asking other people to pray for him. He "has seen Jesus Christ our Lord"; he is his Lord's inspired Minister and Delegate; he has been "caught up into the third heaven"; he has had a thousand proofs that "all things," infallibly, "work together for his good." But he is left by this as certain as ever, with a persuasion as simple as a child's, and also as deep as his own life-worn spirit, that it is immensely well worth his while to secure the intercessory prayers of those who know the way to God in Christ.

CHAPTER XXXII

A COMMENDATION: GREETINGS: A WARNING: A DOXOLOGY

ROMANS xvi. 1-27

ONCE more, with a reverent licence of thought, we may imagine ourselves to be watching in detail the scene in the house of Gaius. Hour upon hour has passed over Paul and his scribe as the wonderful Message has developed itself, at once and everywhere the word of man and the Word of God. They began at morning, and the themes of sin, and righteousness, and glory, of the present and the future of Israel, of the duties of the Christian life, of the special problems of the Roman Mission, have carried the hours along to noon, to afternoon. Now, to the watcher from the westward lattice,

> "Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
> Along Morea's hills the setting sun;
> Not, as in northern climes, obscurely bright,
> But one unclouded blaze of living light."

The Apostle, pacing the chamber, as men are wont to do when they use the pens of others, is aware that his message is at an end, as to doctrine and counsel. But before he bids his willing and wondering secretary rest from his labours, he has to discharge his own heart of the personal thoughts and affections which have lain

ready in it all the while, and which his last words about his coming visit to the City have brought up in all their life and warmth. And now Paul and Tertius are no longer alone; other brethren have found their way to the chamber—Timotheus, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater; Gaius himself; Quartus; and no less a neighbour than Erastus, Treasurer of Corinth. A page of personal messages is yet to be dictated, from St Paul, and from his friends.

Now first he must not forget the pious woman who is —so we surely may assume—to take charge of this inestimable packet, and to deliver it at Rome. We know nothing of Phœbe but from this brief mention. We cannot perhaps be formally certain that she is here described as a female Church-*official*, a "deaconess" in a sense of that word familiar in later developments of Church-order—a woman set apart by the laying-on of hands, appointed to enquire into and relieve temporal distress, and to be the teacher of female enquirers in the mission. But there is at least a great likelihood that something like this was her position; for she was not merely an active Christian, she was "a ministrant of *the Church*." And she was certainly, as a person, worthy of reliance and of loving commendatory praise, now that some cause —absolutely unknown to us; perhaps nothing more unusual than a change of residence, obliged by private circumstances—took her from Achaia to Italy. She had been a devoted and it would seem particularly *a brave* * friend of converts in trouble, and of St Paul himself. Perhaps in the course of her visits to the desolate she had fought difficult battles of protest, where she found harshness and oppression. Perhaps she had pleaded the

* See on προστάτις below.

forgotten cause of the poor, with a woman's courage, before some neglectful richer "brother."

Then Rome itself, as he sees Phœbe reaching it, rises—as yet only in fancy; it was still unknown to him—upon his mind. And there, moving up and down in that strange and almost awful world, he sees one by one the members of a large group of his personal Christian friends, and his beloved Aquila and Prisca are most visible of all. These must be individually saluted.

What the nature of these friendships was we know in some instances, for we are told here. But why the persons were at Rome, in the place which Paul himself had never reached, we do not know, nor ever shall. Many students of the Epistle, it is well known, find a serious difficulty in this list of friends so placed—the persons so familiar, the place so strange; and they would have us look on this sixteenth chapter as a fragment from some other Letter, pieced in here by mistake; or what not. But no ancient copy of the Epistle gives us, by its condition, any real ground for such conjectures. And all that we have to do to realize possibilities in the actual features of the case, is to assume that many at least of this large Roman group, as surely Aquila and Prisca,* had recently migrated from the Levant to Rome; a migration as common and almost as easy then as is the modern influx of foreign denizens to London.

Bishop Lightfoot, in an Excursus in his edition of the Philippian Epistle,† has given us reason to think that not a few of the "Romans" named here by St Paul were members of that "Household of Cæsar" of

* See 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

† Pp. 171-178 (eighth edition).

which in later days he speaks to the Philippians (iv. 22) as containing its "saints," saints who send special greetings to the Macedonian brethren. The *Domus Cæsaris* included "the whole of the Imperial household, the meanest slaves, as well as the most powerful courtiers"; "all persons in the Emperor's service, whether slaves or freemen, in Italy and even in the provinces." The literature of sepulchral inscriptions at Rome is peculiarly rich in allusions to members of "the Household." And it is from this quarter, particularly from discoveries in it made early in the last century, that Lightfoot gets good reasons for thinking that in Phil. iv. 22 we may, quite possibly, be reading a greeting *from* Rome sent by the very persons (speaking roundly) who are here greeted in the Epistle *to* Rome. A place of burial on the Appian Way, devoted to the ashes of Imperial freedmen and slaves, and other similar receptacles, all to be dated with practical certainty about the middle period of the first century, yield the following names: *Amplias, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles, Tryphœna, Tryphosa, Rufus, Hermes, Hermas, Philologus, Julius, Nereis;* a name which might have denoted *the sister* (see ver. 15) of a man Nereus.

Of course such facts must be used with due reserve in inference. But they make it abundantly clear that, in Lightfoot's words, "the names and allusions at the close of the Roman Epistle are in keeping with the circumstances of the metropolis in St Paul's day." They help us to a perfectly truthlike theory. We have only to suppose that among St Paul's converts and friends in Asia and Eastern Europe many either belonged already to the ubiquitous "Household," or entered it after conversion, as purchased slaves or otherwise; and that some time before our Epistle

was written there was a large draft from the provincial to the metropolitan department; and that thus, when St Paul thought of personal Christian friends at Rome, he would happen to think, mainly, of "saints of Cæsar's Household." Such a theory would also, by the way, help to explain the emphasis with which just these "saints" sent their greeting, later, to Philippi. Many of them might have lived in Macedonia, and particularly in the *colonia* of Philippi, before the time of their supposed transference to Rome.

We may add, from Lightfoot's discussion, a word about "the households," or "people"—of Aristobulus and Narcissus—mentioned in the greetings before us It seems at least likely that the Aristobulus of the Epistle was a grandson of Herod the Great, and brother of Agrippa of Judea; a prince who lived and died at Rome. At his death it would be no improbable thing that his "household" should pass by legacy to the Emperor, while they would still, as a sort of clan, keep their old master's name. Aristobulus' servants, probably many of them Jews (*Herodion*, St Paul's kinsman, may have been a retainer of this *Herod*), would thus now be a part of "the Household of Cæsar," and the Christians among them would be a group of "the Household saints." As to the Narcissus of the Epistle, he may well have been the all-powerful freedman of Claudius, put to death early in Nero's time. On his death, his great *familia* would become, by confiscation, part of "the Household"; and its Christian members would be thought of by St Paul as among "the Household saints."

Thus it is at least possible that the holy lives which here pass in such rapid file before us were lived not only in Rome, but in a connexion more or less close

with the service and business of the Court of Nero. So freely does grace make light of circumstance.

Now it is time to come from our preliminaries to the text.

Ver. 1. **But**—the word may mark the movement of thought from his own delay in reaching them to Phœbe's immediate coming—**I commend to you Phœbe, our sister,** (this Christian woman bore, without change, and without reproach, the name of the Moon-Goddess of the Greeks,) **being a ministrant** (*διάκονον*) **of the**

Ver. 2. **Church which is in Cenchreæ,** the Ægæan port of Corinth; **that you may welcome her, in the Lord,** as a fellow-member of His Body, **in a way worthy of the saints,** with all the respect and the affection of the Gospel, **and that you may stand by her** (*παραστῆτε αὐτῇ*) **in any matter in which she may need you,** stranger as she will be at Rome. **For she on her part** (*αὕτη*) **has proved* a stand-by** (almost **a champion,** one who *stands up for* others, *προστάτις*) **of many,** aye, **and of me** among them.

Ver. 3. Greet **Prisca† and Aquila** (*Akŭlas*), **my co-**

Ver. 4. **workers in Christ Jesus;** the friends **who** (*οἵτινες*) **for my life's sake submitted their own throat** to the knife (it was at some stern crisis otherwise utterly unknown to us, but well known in heaven); **to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the Churches of the Nations;** for they saved the man whom the Lord consecrated to the service of the Gentile

Ver. 5. world. **And the Church at their house** greet with them; that is, the Christians of their neighbourhood, who used Aquila's great room as their

* Lit., "*did prove*": it is the epistolary aorist.

† Read Πρίσκαν not Πρίσκιλλαν.

house of prayer; the embryo of our parish or district Church. This provision of a place of worship was an old usage of this holy pair, whom St Paul's almost reverent affection presents to us in such a living individuality. They had gathered "*a domestic Church*" at Corinth, not many months before (1 Cor. xvi. 19). And earlier still, at Ephesus (Acts xviii. 26), they wielded such a Christian influence that they must have been a central point of influence and gathering there also. In Prisca, or Priscilla, as it has been remarked,* we have "an example of what a married woman may do, for the general service of the Church, in conjunction with home-duties, just as Phœbe is the type of the unmarried servant of the Church, or deaconess."

Greet Epænĕtus, my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia,† that is of the Ephesian Province, **unto Christ**; doubtless one who "owed his soul" to St Paul in that three years' missionary pastorate at Ephesus, amd who was now bound to him by the indescribable tie which makes the converter and converted one.

Ver. 6. **Greet Mary**—a Jewess probably, *Miriam* or *Maria*,—**for she** (ἥτις) **toiled hard for you**‡; when and how we cannot know.

Ver. 7. **Greet Andronicus and Junias**, *Junianus*, **my kinsmen, and my fellow-captives** in Christ's war (συναιχμαλώτους); a loving and mindful reference to the human relationships which so freely, but not lightly, he had sacrificed for Christ, and to some persecution-battle (was it at Philippi?) when these good men had shared his prison; **men who** (οἵτινες) **are distinguished**

* By the late Dean Howson, in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.
† So certainly read, not Ἀχαΐας.
‡ Reading ὑμᾶς.

among the apostles; either as being themselves, in a secondary sense, devoted "*apostles*," Christ's missionary delegates, though not of the Apostolate proper, or as being honoured above the common, for their toil and their character, by the Apostolic Brotherhood; **who also before me came to be**, as they are, **in Christ.*** Not improbably these two early converts helped to "goad" (Acts xxvi. 14) the conscience of their still persecuting Kinsman, and to prepare the way of Christ in his heart.

Ver. 8. **Greet Amplias**, *Ampliatus*, **my beloved in the Lord**; surely a personal convert of his own.

Ver. 9. **Greet Urbanus, my co-worker in Christ, and Stachys**—another masculine name—**my beloved.**

Ver. 10. **Greet Apelles, that** (τὸν) **tested man in Christ**; the Lord knows, not we, the tests he stood.

Greet those who belong to Aristobulus' people.†

Ver. 11. **Greet Herodion, my kinsman.**

Greet those who belong to Narcissus' people, those who are in the Lord.

Ver. 12. **Greet Tryphæna and Tryphosa,** (almost certainly, by the type of their names, female *slaves*,) **who toil** in the Lord, perhaps as "servants of the Church," so far as earthly service would allow them.

Greet Persis, the beloved woman, (with faultless delicacy he does here say "*my* beloved," as he had said of the Christian *men* mentioned just above,) **for she** (ἥτις) **toiled hard in the Lord**; perhaps at some time when St Paul had watched her in a former and more Eastern home.

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* The perfect, γέγοναστ, γέγοναν, imports the permanence of their blessed position, up to the date.

† See above, p. 425, on this allusion, and on *Herodion*, and on "*Narcissus' people.*"

Ver. 13. **Greet Rufus**—just possibly the Rufus of Mar. xv. 21, brother of Alexander, and son of Cross-carrying Simon; the family was evidently known to St Mark, and we have good cause to think that St Mark wrote primarily for *Roman* readers—Rufus, **the chosen man in the Lord**, a saint of the *élite*; and **his mother—and mine!** This nameless woman had done a mother's part, somehow and somewhere, to the motherless Missionary, and her lovingkindness stands recorded now

"In either Book of Life, here and above."

Ver. 14. **Greet Asyncrĭtus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrŏbas,** Hermes, and the brethren who are with them; dwellers perhaps in some isolated and distant quarter of Rome, a little Church by themselves.

Ver. 15. **Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and all the saints who are with them,** in their assembly.

Ver. 16. **Greet one another with a sacred kiss**; the Oriental pledge of friendship, and of respect. **All** (read πᾶσαι) **the Churches of Christ greet you**; Corinth, Cenchreæ, "with all the saints in the whole of Achaia" (2 Cor. i. 1).

The roll of names is over, with its music, that subtle characteristic of such recitations of human personalities, and with its moving charm for the heart due almost equally to our glimpses of information about one here and one there and to our total ignorance about others; an ignorance of everything about them but that they were at Rome, and that they were in Christ. We seem, by an effort of imagination, to see, as through a bright cloud, the faces of the company,

and to catch the far-off voices; but the dream "dissolves in wrecks"; we do not know them, we do not know their distant world. But we do know HIM in whom they were, and are; and that they have been "with Him, which is far better," for now so long a time of rest and glory. Some no doubt by deaths of terror and wonder, by the fire, by the horrible wild-beasts, "departed to be with Him"; some went, perhaps, with a dismissal as gentle as love and stillness could make it. But however, they were the Lord's; they are with the Lord. And we, in Him,

> "Are tending upward too,
> As fast as time can move."

So we watch this unknown yet well-beloved company, with a sense of fellowship and expectation impossible out of Christ. This page is no mere relic of the past; it is a list of friendships to be made hereafter, and to be possessed for ever, in the endless life where personality indeed shall be eternal, but where also the union of personalities, in Christ, shall be beyond our utmost present thought.

But the Apostle cannot close with these messages of love. He remembers another and anxious need, a serious spiritual peril in the Roman community. He has not even alluded to it before, but it must be handled, however briefly, now:

Ver. 17. **But I appeal to you, brethren, to watch the persons who make the divisions and the stumbling-blocks** you know of, **alien to the teaching which you learnt** (there is an emphasis on "*you*," as if to difference the true-hearted converts from these troublers); **—and do turn away from them**; go, and keep, out of their

way; wise counsel for a peaceable but effectual resistance. Ver. 18. For such people are not bondservants of our Lord Jesus Christ, but they are bondservants of their own belly. They talk much of a mystic freedom; and free indeed they are from the accepted dominion of the Redeemer—but all the more they are enslaved to themselves; and by their (*τῆς*) pious language and their specious pleas they quite beguile (*ἐξαπατῶσι*) the hearts of the simple, the unsuspicious. And they may perhaps have special hopes of beguiling *you*, because of your well-known readiness to submit, with the submission of faith, to sublime truths; a noble character, but calling inevitably for the safeguards of intelligent caution: Ver. 19. For your obedience, "the obedience of faith," shewn when the Gospel reached you, was carried by report to all men, and so to these beguilers, who hope now to entice your faith astray. As regards you, therefore, looking only at your personal condition, I rejoice. Only I wish you to be wise as to what is good, but uncontaminated (by defiling knowledge) as to what is evil. He would not have their holy readiness to believe distorted into an unhallowed and falsely tolerant curiosity. He would have their faith not only submissive but spiritually intelligent (*σοφούς*); then they would be alive to the risks of a counterfeited and illusory "Gospel." They would feel, as with an educated Christian instinct, where decisively to hold back, where to refuse attention to unwholesome teaching. Ver. 20. But the God of our (*τῆς*) peace will crush Satan down beneath your feet speedily. This spiritual mischief, writhing itself, like the serpent of Paradise, into your happy precincts, is nothing less than a stratagem of the great Enemy's own; a movement

of his mysterious personal antagonism to your Lord, and to you His people. But the Enemy's Conqueror, working in you, will make the struggle short and decisive. Meet the inroad in the name of Him who has made peace for you, and works peace in you, and it will soon be over.* **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be** (or may we not render **is**?) **with you.**

What precisely was the mischief, who precisely were the dangerous teachers, spoken of here so abruptly and so urgently by St Paul? It is easier to ask the question than to answer it. Some expositors have sought a solution in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters, and have found in an extreme school of theoretical "liberty" these men of "pious language and specious pleas." But to us this seems impossible. Almost explicitly, in those chapters, he identifies himself *in principle* with "the capable"; certainly there is not a whisper of horror as regards their principle, and nothing but a friendly while unreserved reproof for the uncharity of their practice. Here he has in his mind men whose purposes and whose teachings are nothing but evil; who are to be—not indeed persecuted but—avoided; not met in conference, but solemnly refused a further hearing. In our view, the case was one of embryo *Gnosticism*. The Romans, so we take it, were troubled by teachers who used the language of Christianity, saying much of "Redemption," and of "Emancipation," and something of "Christ," and of "the Spirit"; but all the while they meant a thing totally different from the Gospel of the Cross. They meant by redemption and freedom, the

* In our short Commentary on the Epistle in *The Cambridge Bible* we advocate a rather different view of these verses in detail. But the main reference seems to us to be what it then seemed

liberation of spirit from matter. They meant by Christ and the Spirit, mere links in a chain of phantom beings, supposed to span the gulf between the Absolute Unknowable Existence and the finite World. And their morality too often tended to the tenet that as matter was hopelessly evil, and spirit the unfortunate prisoner in matter, the material body had nothing to do with its unwilling, and pure, Inhabitant: let the body go its own evil way, and work out its base desires.

Our sketch is taken from developed Gnosticism, such as it is known to have been a generation or two later than St Paul. But it is more than likely that such errors were present, in essence, all through the Apostolic age. And it is easy to see how they could from the first disguise themselves in the special terminology of the Gospel of liberty and of the Spirit.

Such things may look to us, after eighteen hundred years, only like fossils of the old rocks. They are indeed fossil specimens—but of existing species. The atmosphere of the Christian world is still infected, from time to time—perhaps more now than a few generations ago, whatever that fact may mean—with unwholesome subtleties, in which the purest forms of truth are indescribably manipulated into the deadliest related error; a mischief sure to betray itself, however, (where the man tempted to parley with it is at once wakeful and humble,) by some fatal flaw of pride, or of untruthfulness, or of an uncleanness however subtle. And for the believer so tempted, under common circumstances, there is still, as of old, no counsel more weighty than St Paul's counsel here. If he would deal with such snares in the right way, he must "*turn away from them.*" He must turn away to the Christ

of history. He must occupy himself anew with the primeval Gospel of pardon, holiness, and heaven.

Is the Letter to be closed here at last? Not quite yet; not until one and then another of the gathered circle has committed his greetings to it. And first comes up the dear Timotheus, the man nearest of all to the strong heart of the Apostle. We seem to see him alive before us, so much has St Paul, in one Epistle and another, but above all in his dying Letter to Timotheus himself, contributed to a portrait. He is many years younger than his leader and Christian father. His face, full of thought, feeling, and devotion, is rather earnest than strong. But it has the strength of patience, and of absolute sincerity, and of rest in Christ. Timotheus repays the affection of Paul with unwavering fidelity. And he will be true to the end to his Lord and Redeemer, through whatever tears and agonies of sensibility. Then Lucius will speak, perhaps the Cyrenian of Antioch (Acts xiii. 1); and Jason, perhaps the convert of Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 5); and Sosipater, perhaps the Berean Sopater of Acts xx. 4; three blood-relations of the Apostle, who was not left utterly alone of human affinities, though he had laid them all at his Master's feet. Then the faithful Tertius claims the well-earned privilege of writing one sentence for himself. And Gaius modestly requests his salutation, and Erastus, the man of civic dignity and large affairs. He has found no discord between the tenure of a great secular office and the life of Christ; but to-day he is just a brother with brethren, named side by side with the Quartus whose only title is that beautiful one, "*the*

brother," "our fellow in the family of God." So the gathered friends speak each in his turn to the Christians of the City; we listen as the names are given:

Ver. 21. **There greets you Timotheus my fellow-worker, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipatrus, my kinsmen.**

Ver. 22. **There greets you I, Tertius, who wrote the Epistle in the Lord**; he had been simply Paul's conscious pen, but also he had willingly drawn the strokes as being one with Christ, and as working in His cause.

Ver. 23. **There greets you Gaius, host of me and of the whole Church**; universal welcomer to his door of all who love his beloved Lord, and now particularly of all at Corinth who need his Lord's Apostle.

There greets you Erastus, the Treasurer of the City, and Quartus (*Kouartos*), the brother.*

Here, as we seem to discern the scene, there is indeed a pause, and what might look like an end. Tertius lays down the pen. The circle of friends breaks up, and Paul is left alone—alone with his unseen Lord, and with that long, silent Letter; his own, yet not his own. He takes it in his hands, to read, to ponder, to believe, to call up again the Roman converts, so dear, so far away, and to commit them again for faith, and for life, to Christ and to His Father. He sees them beset by the encircling masses of pagan idolatry and vice, and by the embittered Judaism which meets them at every turn. He sees them hindered by their own mutual prejudices and mistakes; for they are

* Ver. 24 is probably to be omitted, as an insertion after date.

sinners still. Lastly, he sees them approached by this serpentine delusion of an unhallowed mysticism, which would substitute the thought of matter for that of sin, and reverie for faith, and an unknowable Somewhat, inaccessible to the finite, for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And then he sees this astonishing Gospel, whose glorious outline and argument he has been caused to draw, as it was never drawn before, on those papyrus pages; the Truth of God, not of man; veiled so long, promised so long, known at last; the Gospel which displays the sinner's peace, the believer's life, the radiant boundless future of the saints, and, in all and above all, the eternal Love of the Father and the Son.

In this Gospel, "*his* Gospel," he sees manifested afresh his God. And he adores Him afresh, and commits to Him afresh these dear ones of the Roman Mission.

He must give them one word more, to express his overrunning heart. He must speak to them of Him who is Almighty for them against the complex might of evil. He must speak of that Gospel in whose lines the almighty grace will run. It is the Gospel of Paul, but also and first the "*proclamation made by Jesus Christ*" of Himself as our Salvation. It is the Secret "*hushed*" throughout the long æons of the past, but now spoken out indeed; the Message which the Lord of Ages, choosing His hour aright, now imperially commands to be announced to the Nations, that they may submit to it and live. It is the vast Fulfilment of those mysterious Scriptures which are now the credentials, and the watchword, of its preachers. It is the supreme expression of the sole and eternal Wisdom; clear to the intellect of the heaven-taught child; more unfathom-

able, even to the heavenly watchers, than Creation itself. To the God of this Gospel he must now entrust the Romans, in the glowing words in which he worships HIM through the Son in whom He is seen and praised. To this God—while the very language is broken by its own force—he must give glory everlasting, for His Gospel, and for Himself.

He takes the papers, and the pen. With dim eyes, and in large, laborious letters,* and forgetting at the close, in the intensity of his soul, to make perfect the grammatical connexion, he inscribes, in the twilight, this most wonderful of Doxologies. Let us watch him to its close, and then in silence leave him before his Lord, and ours:

Ver. 25. **But to Him who is able to establish you, according to my Gospel, and the proclamation of,** made by, **Jesus Christ, true to** (*κατὰ*) (the) **unveiling of (the) Secret hushed in silence during ages of times,**

Ver. 26. **but manifested now, and through (the) prophetic Scriptures, according to the edict of the God of Ages, for faith's obedience, published among**

Ver. 27. **all the Nations—to God Only Wise, through Jesus Christ—to whom be the glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen.**

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* Gal. vi. 11: "See with *what great letters* I have written to you, *in autograph*!" It has been remarked that this great Doxology bears a literary likeness to other passages which he probably wrote with his own hand.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

BY THE REV.
MARCUS DODS, D.D.

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INTRODUCTION.

'After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; and found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. And he drave them from the judgment seat. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things. And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow."—Acts xviii. 1–18.

INTRODUCTION.

CORINTH was the first Gentile city in which Paul spent any considerable time. It afforded him the opportunities he sought as a preacher of Christ. Lying as it did on the famous Isthmus which connected Northern and Southern Greece, and defended by an almost impregnable citadel, it became a place of great political importance. Its position gave it also commercial advantages. Many traders bringing goods from Asia to Italy preferred to unlade at Cenchrea and carry their bales across the narrow neck of land rather than risk the dangers of doubling Cape Malea. So commonly was this done that arrangements were made for carrying the smaller ships themselves across the Isthmus on rollers; and shortly after Paul's visit Nero cut the first turf of an intended, but never finished, canal to connect the two seas.

Becoming by its situation and importance the head of the Achaian League, it bore the brunt of the conqueror's onslaught and was completely destroyed by the Roman general Mummius in the year 146 B.C. For a hundred years it lay in ruins, peopled by few but relic-hunters, who groped among the demolished temples for bits of sculpture or Corinthian brass. The all-discerning eye of Julius Cæsar, however, could not

overlook the excellence of the site; and accordingly he sent a colony of Roman freedmen, the most industrious of the metropolitan population, to rebuild and replenish the city. Hence the names of Corinthians mentioned in the New Testament are mainly such as betoken a Roman and servile origin, such as Gaius, Fortunatus, Justus, Crispus, Quartus, Achaicus. Under these auspices Corinth speedily regained something of its former beauty, all its former wealth, and apparently more than its original size. But the old profligacy was also to some extent revived; and in Paul's day "to live as they do at Corinth" was the equivalent for living in luxury and licentiousness. Sailors from all parts with a little money to spend, merchants eager to compensate for the privations of a voyage, refugees and adventurers of all kinds, were continually passing through the city, introducing foreign customs and confounding moral distinctions. Too plainly are the innate vices of the Corinthians reflected in this Epistle. On the stage the Corinthian was usually represented drunk, and Paul found that this characteristic vice was allowed to follow his converts even to the communion table. In the letter there are also discernible some reminiscences of what Paul had seen in the Isthmian and gladiatorial contests. He had noted, too, as he walked through Corinth, how the fire of the Roman army had consumed the meaner houses of wood, hay, stubble, but had left standing, though charred, the precious marbles.

Nowhere do we see so clearly as in this Epistle the multifarious and delicate work required of one on whom lay the care of all the Churches. A host of difficult questions poured in upon him: questions regarding conduct, questions of casuistry, questions about the

ordering of public worship and social intercourse, as well as questions which struck to the very root of the Christian faith. Are we to dine with our heathen relatives? May we intermarry with those who are not yet Christian? may we marry at all? Can slaves continue in the service of heathen masters? What relation does the Communion hold to our ordinary meals? Is the man who speaks with tongues a superior kind of Christian, and must the prophet who speaks with the Spirit be allowed to interrupt other speakers? Paul in a previous letter had instructed the Corinthians on some of these points, but they had misunderstood him; and he now takes up their difficulties point by point, and finally disposes of them. Had nothing been required but the solution of practical difficulties, Paul's part had not been so delicate to play. But even through their request for advice there shone the ineradicable Greek vices of vanity, restless intellectualism, litigiousness, and sensuality. They even seemed to be on the perilous brink of glorying in a spurious liberality which could condone vices condemned by the heathen. In these circumstances the calmness and patience with which Paul pronounces on their entanglements are striking. But even more striking are the boundless intellectual vigour, the practical sagacity, the ready application to life, of the profoundest Christian principles. In reading the Epistle, one is amazed at the brevity and yet completeness with which intricate practical problems are discussed, the unerring firmness with which, through all plausible sophistry and fallacious scruples, the radical principle is laid hold of, and the sharp finality with which it is expressed. Nor is there any lack in the Epistle of the warm, rapid, and stirring eloquence which is associated with the

name of Paul. It was a happy circumstance for the future of Christianity that in those early days, when there were almost as many wild suggestions and foolish opinions as there were converts, there should have been in the Church this one clear, practical judgment, this pure embodiment of the wisdom of Christianity.

It is in this Epistle we get the clearest view of the actual difficulties encountered by Christianity in a heathen community. We here see the religion of Christ confronted by the culture, and the vices, and the various social arrangements of paganism; we see the ferment and turmoil its introduction occasioned, the changes it wrought in daily life and common customs, the difficulty men honestly experienced in comprehending what their new principles required; we see how the higher aims and views of Christianity sifted the social customs of the ancient world, now allowing and now rejecting; and, above all, we see the principles on which we ourselves must proceed in solving the social and ecclesiastical difficulties that embarrass ourselves. It is in this Epistle, in short, that we see the Apostle of the Gentiles in his proper and peculiar element, exhibiting the applicability of the religion of Christ to the Gentile world and its power, not to satisfy merely the aspirations of devout Jews, but to scatter the darkness and quicken the dead soul of the pagan world.

Paul's experience in Corinth is full of significance. On arriving at Corinth, he went, as usual, to the synagogue; and when his message was rejected by the Jews, he betook himself to the Gentiles. Next door to the synagogue, in the house of a convert called Justus, the Christian congregation was founded; and, to the annoy-

ance of the Jews, one of the rulers of the synagogue, Crispus by name, attached himself to it. The Jewish irritation and envy smouldered until a new governor came from Rome, and then it found vent. This new governor was one of the most popular men of his time, the brother of Nero's tutor, the well-known Seneca. He was himself so markedly the representative of "sweetness and light" that he was commonly spoken of as "the sweet Gallio." The Jews in Corinth evidently fancied that a man of this character would be facile and would desire to make favour with all parties in his new province. They accordingly appealed to him, but were met with a prompt and decided rebuff. Their new governor assured them he had no jurisdiction over such questions. As soon as he hears it is not a matter in which the property or persons of his lieges is implicated he bids his lictors clear the court. The rabble that always gathers round a courthouse, seeing a Jew ignominiously dismissed, set upon him and beat him under the very eye of the judge, the beginning of that furious, unreasoning, brutal outrage which has pursued the Jews in all countries of Christendom.

Gallio has become the synonym for religious indifference. We call the easy-going, good-natured man who meets all your religious appeals with a shrug of the shoulders or a genial, bantering answer a Gallio. This is perhaps a little hard upon Gallio, who no doubt attended to his own religion in much the same spirit as his friends. When the narrative says that "he cared for none of those things," it means that he gave no heed to what seemed a common street brawl. It is rather the haughtiness of the Roman proconsul than the indifference of the man of the world that appears

in his conduct. These squabbles among Jews about matters of their law were not affairs he could stoop to investigate or was by his office required to investigate. And yet it is not Gallio's proconsulship of Achaia nor his relationship to Roman celebrities that has made his name familiar to the modern world, but his connection with these wretched Jews that appeared before his small chair that morning. In Paul's little, insignificant, worn figure it was not to be expected he should see anything so remarkable as to stimulate inquiry; he could not have comprehended that the chief connection in which his name would afterwards appear would be in connection with Paul; and yet had he but known, had he but interested himself in what evidently so deeply interested his new subjects, how different might his own history have become, and how different, too, the history of Christianity. But filled with a Roman's disdain for questions of which the sword could not cut the knot, and with a Roman's reluctance to implicate himself with anything which was not sufficiently of this world to be adjusted by Roman law, he cleared his court and called the next case. The "sweet Gallio," patient and affable to every other kind of complainant, had nothing but disdain and undisguised repugnance for these Eastern dreamers. The Roman, who could sympathize with almost every nationality and find room for all men in the wide lap of the empire, made himself detested in the East by his harsh contempt for mysticism and religion, and was met by a disdain deeper than his own.

"The brooding East with awe beheld
Her impious younger world;
The Roman tempest swelled and swelled,
And on her head was hurled:

> The East bowed low before the blast
> In patient, deep disdain;
> She let the legions thunder past,
> And plunged in thought again."

Now in the Englishman there is much that closely resembles the Roman character. There is the same ability for practical achievement, the same capacity for conquest and for making much of conquered peoples, the same reverence for law, the same faculty for dealing with the world and the human race as it actually is! the same relish for and mastery of the present system of things. But along with these qualities there go in both races their natural defects: a tendency to forget the ideal and the unseen in the seen and the actual; to measure all things by material standards; to be more deeply impressed with the conquests of the sword than with those of the Spirit, and with the gains that are counted in coin rather than with those that are seen in character; and to be far more intensely interested in whatever concerns politics than in anything that concerns religion. So pronounced is this materialistic, or at any rate worldly, tendency in this country, that it has been formulated into a system for the conduct of life, under the name of secularism. And so popular has this system become, especially among working-men, that the chief promoter of it believes that his adherents may be numbered by hundreds of thousands.

The essential idea of secularism is "that precedence should be given to the duties of this life over those which pertain to another life," the reason being that this life is the first in certainty, and should therefore be the first in importance. Mr. Holyoake carefully states his position in these words: "We do not say that every man ought to give an *exclusive* attention to

this world, because that would be to commit the old sin of dogmatism, and exclude the possibility of another world and of walking by different light from that by which alone we are able to walk. But as our *knowledge* is confined to this life, and testimony, and conjecture, and probability are all that can be set forth with respect to another life, we think we are justified in giving *precedence* to the duties of this state and of attaching primary importance to the morality of man to man." This statement has the merit of being undogmatic, but it is in consequence proportionately vague. If a man is not to give *exclusive* attention to this world, how much attention is he to give to another? Would Mr. Holyoake think the amount of attention most Christians give to the other world excessive? If so, the attention he thinks suitable must be limited indeed.

But if this theoretical statement, framed in view of the exigencies of controversy, be scarcely intelligible, the position of the practical secularist is perfectly intelligible. He says to himself, I have occupations and duties now that require all my strength; and if there is another world, the best preparation for it I can have is to do thoroughly and with all my strength the duties now pressing upon me. Most of us have felt the attraction of this position. It has a sound of candid, manly common-sense, and appeals to the English character in us, to our esteem for what is practical. Besides, it is perfectly true that the best preparation for any future world is to do thoroughly well the duties of our present state. But the whole question remains, What *are* the duties of the present state? These can not be determined unless we come to some decision as to the truth or untruth of Christianity. If there is a God, it is not merely in the future, but now, that we

have duties to Him, that all our duties are tinged with the idea of His presence and of our relation to Him. It is absurd to defer all consideration of God to a future world; God is as much in this world as in any: and if so, our whole life, in every part of it, must be, not a secular, but a godly, life—a life we live well and can only live well when we live it in fellowship with Him. The mind that can divide life into duties of the present and duties that concern the future entirely misapprehends the teaching of Christianity, and misconceives what life is. If a man does not know whether there is a God, then he cannot know what his present duties are, neither can he do these duties as he ought. He may do them better than I can; but he does not do them as well as he himself could were he owning the presence and accepting the gracious, sanctifying influences of the Divine Spirit.

To the help of secularism comes also in our case another influence, which told with Gallio. Even the gentle and affable Gallio felt annoyed that so squalid a case should be among the first that came before him in Achaia. He had left Rome with the good wishes of the Imperial Court, had made a triumphal procession of several weeks to Corinth, had been installed there with all the pomp that Roman officials, military and civil, could devise; he had been met and acknowledged by the authorities, had sworn in his new officers, had caused his tesselated pavement to be laid and his chair of state set down: and as if in mockery of all this ceremony and display of power came this pitiful squabble from the synagogue, a matter of which not a man of standing in his court knew or cared anything, a matter in which Jews and slaves alone were interested. Christianity has always found its warmest supporters

in the lower strata of society. It has not always been quite respectable. And here again Englishmen are like Romans: they are strongly influenced by what is respectable, by what has position and standing in the world. If Christianity were zealously promoted by princes, and leading officials, and distinguished professors and writers of genius, how much easier would it be to accept it; but its most zealous promoters are so commonly men of no education, men with odd names, men whose grammar and pronunciation put them beyond the pale of good society, men whose methods are rough and whose views are unphilosophical and crude. As in Corinth, so now, not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; and we must beware therefore of shrinking, as Gallio did, from what is essentially the most powerful agent for good in the world because it is so often found with vulgar and repulsive adjuncts. The earthen vessels, as Paul reminds us, the pots of coarsest clay, chipped and crusted with coarse contact with the world, may yet hold treasure of priceless value.

It is always a question how far we should endeavour to become all things to all men, to win the wise of this world by presenting Christianity as a philosophy, and to win the well-born and cultured by presenting it in the dress of an attractive style. Paul as he left Athens, where he had met with so little success, was apparently exercised with this same question. He had tried to meet the Athenians on their own ground, showing his familiarity with their writers; but he seems to think that at Corinth another method may be more successful, and, as he tells them, "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." It was, he says, with much fear and trembling he adopted

this course; he was weak and dispirited at the time, at any rate; and it is plain that his resolve to abandon all such appeals as might tell with rhetoricians cost him an effort and made a deep impression upon him. He himself saw so clearly the foolishness of the Cross; he knew so well what a field for mockery was presented to the Greek mind by the preaching of salvation through a crucified person. He was very conscious of the poor appearance he made as a speaker among these fluent Greeks, whose ears were as cultivated as musicians', and whose sense of beauty, trained by seeing their picked young men contend in the games, received a shock from "his weak and contemptible bodily presence," as they called it. Yet, all things considered, he made up his mind that he would trust his success to the simple statement of facts. He would preach "Christ and Him crucified." He would tell them what Jesus had been and done. He felt jealous of anything which might attract men to his preaching save the Cross of Christ. And he was more successful in Corinth than he had been elsewhere. In that profligate city he was obliged to stay eighteen months, because the work so grew under his hand.

And so it has ever been since. As matter of fact, it is not Christ's teaching, but His death, which has kindled the enthusiasm and the devotion of men. It is this which has conquered and won them, and delivered them from the bondage of self, and set them in a larger world. It is when we believe that this Person has loved us with a love stronger than death that we become His. It is when we can use Paul's words "who loved me and gave Himself for me" that we feel, as Paul felt, the constraining power of this love. It is this that forms between the soul and Christ that secret

tie which has been the strength and happiness of so many lives. If our own life is neither strong nor happy, it is because we are not admitting the love of Christ, and are striving to live independently of Him who is our Life. Christ is the perennial fountain of love, of hopefulness, of true spiritual life. In Him there is enough to purify, and brighten, and sustain all human life. Brought into contact with the intellectualism and the vice of Corinth, the love of Christ proved its reality and its overcoming strength; and when we bring it into contact with ourselves, burdened, and perplexed, and tempted as we are, we find that still it is the power of God unto salvation.

THE CHURCH IN CORINTH.

"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus **Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge: even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."—1 Cor. i. 2–9.**

II.

THE CHURCH IN CORINTH.

IN the year 58 A.D., when Paul wrote this Epistle, Corinth was a city with a mixed population, and conspicuous for the turbulence and immorality commonly found in seaports frequented by traders and seamen from all parts of the world. Paul had received letters from some of the Christians in Corinth which disclosed a state of matters in the Church far from desirable. He had also more particular accounts from some members of Chloe's household who were visiting Ephesus, and who told him how sadly disturbed the little community of Christians was by party spirit and scandals in life and worship.

In the letter itself the designation of the writer and of those addressed first claims our attention.

The writer identifies himself as "Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by call, through the will of God." An Apostle is one sent, as Christ was sent by the Father. "As the Father sent Me, even so send I you." It was therefore an office no one could take to himself, nor was it the promotion resulting from previous service. To the apostleship the sole entrance was through the call of Christ; and in virtue of this call Paul became, as he says, an Apostle. And it is this which explains one of the most prominent of his characteristics: the

singular combination of humility and authority, of self-depreciation and self-assertion. He is filled with a sense of his own unworthiness; he is "less than the least of the Apostles," "not worthy to be called an Apostle." On the other hand, he never hesitates to command the Churches, to rebuke the foremost man in the Church, to assert his claim to be listened to as the ambassador of Christ.

This extraordinary humility and equally remarkable boldness and authority had one common root in his perception that it was through Christ's call and by God's will he was an Apostle. The work of going to all the busiest parts of the world and proclaiming Christ was to his mind far too great a work for him to aspire to at his own instance. He could never have aspired to such a position as this gave him. But God called him to it: and, with this authority at his back, he feared nothing, neither hardship nor defeat.

And this is for us all the true and eternal source of humility and confidence. Let a man feel sure that he is called of God to do what he is doing, let him be fully persuaded in his own mind that the course he follows is God's will for him, and he will press on undauntedly, even though opposed. It is altogether a new strength with which a man is inspired when he is made conscious that God calls him to do this or that, when behind conscience or the plain requirements of human affairs and circumstances the presence of the living God makes itself felt. Well may we exclaim, with one who had to stand alone and follow a solitary path, conscious only of God's approval, and sustained by that consciousness against the disapproval of all, "Oh that we could take that simple view of things as to feel that the one thing which lies before us is to

please God! What gain is it to please the world, to please the great, nay even to please those whom we love, compared with this? What gain is it to be applauded, admired, courted, followed, compared with this one aim of not being disobedient to a heavenly vision?"

In addressing the Church at Corinth, Paul unites with himself a Christian called Sosthenes. This was the name of the chief ruler of the synagogue at Corinth who was beaten by the Greeks in Gallio's court, and it is not impossible that it was he who was now with Paul in Ephesus. If so, this would account for his being associated with Paul in writing to Corinth. What share in the letter Sosthenes actually had it is impossible to say. He may have written it to Paul's dictation; he may have suggested here and there a point to be touched upon. Certainly Paul's easy assumption of a friend as joint writer of the letter sufficiently shows that he had no such stiff and formal idea of inspiration as we have. Apparently he did not stay to inquire whether Sosthenes was qualified to be the author of a canonical book; but knowing the authoritative position he had held among the Jews of Corinth, he naturally conjoins his name with his own in addressing the new Christian community.

The persons to whom this letter is addressed are identified as "the Church of God which is at Corinth." With them are joined in character, if not as recipients of this letter, "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." And therefore we should perhaps not be far wrong if we were to gather from this that Paul would have defined the Church as the company of all those persons who "call upon the name of Jesus Christ." Calling upon the name of any

one implies trust in him; and those who call upon the name of Jesus Christ are those who look up to Christ as their supreme Lord, able to supply all their need. It is this belief in one Lord which brings men together as a Christian Church.

But at once we are confronted with the difficulty that many persons who call upon the name of the Lord do so with no inward conviction of their need, and consequently with no real dependence upon Christ or allegiance to Him. In other words, the apparent Church is not the real Church. Hence the distinction between the Church visible, which consists of all who nominally or outwardly belong to the Christian community, and the Church invisible, which consists of those who inwardly and really are the subjects and people of Christ. Much confusion of thought is avoided by keeping in mind this obvious distinction. In the Epistles of Paul it is sometimes the ideal, invisible Church which is addressed or spoken of; sometimes it is the actual, visible Church, imperfect, stained with unsightly blots, calling for rebuke and correction. Where the visible Church is, and of whom composed, we can always say; its members can be counted, its property estimated, its history written. But of the invisible Church no man can fully write the history, or name the members, or appraise its properties, gifts, and services.

From the earliest times it has been customary to say that the true Church must be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. That is true if the Church invisible be meant. The true body of Christ, the company of persons who in all countries and ages have called upon Christ and served Him, do form one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. But it is not true of the Church visible and disastrous consequences have at various

times followed the attempt to ascertain by the application of these notes which actual visible Church has the best claim to be considered the true Church.

Without concerning himself explicitly to describe the distinguishing features of the true Church, Paul here gives us four notes which must always be found[1]:—

1. Consecration. The Church is composed of "them that have been sanctified in Christ Jesus."

2. Holiness: "called to be saints."

3. Universality: "all that in every place call on the name," etc.

4. Unity: "both their Lord and ours."

1. The true Church is, first of all, composed of consecrated people. The word "sanctify" bears here a somewhat different meaning from that which we commonly attach to it. It means rather that which is set apart or destined to holy uses than that which has been made holy. It is in this meaning the word is used by our Lord when He says, "For your sakes I sanctify"—or set apart—"Myself." The Church by its very existence is a body of men and women set apart for a holy use. The New Testament word for Church, *ecclesia*, means a society "called out" from among other men. It exists not for common purposes, but to witness for God and for Christ, to maintain before the eyes and in all the common ways and works of men the ideal life realized in Christ and the presence and holiness of God. It becomes those who form the Church to meet God's purpose in calling them out of the world and to consider themselves as devoted and set apart to attain that purpose. Their destination is no longer that of the world; and a spirit set upon the

[1] Comp. F. W. Robertson's *Lectures on Corinthians.*

attainment of the joys and advantages the world gives is wholly out of place in them.

2. More particularly those who compose the Church are called to be "saints." Holiness is the unmistakable characteristic of the true Church. The glory of God, inseparable from His essence, is His holiness, His eternally willing and doing only what is the very best. To think of God as doing wrong is blasphemy. Were God even once to do other than the best and right, the loving and just thing, He would cease to be God. It is the task of the Church to exhibit in human life and character this holiness of God's. Those whom God calls into His Church, He calls to be, above all else, holy.

The Church of Corinth was in some danger of forgetting this. One of its members in particular had been guilty of a scandalous breach even of the heathen code of morals; and of him Paul uncompromisingly says, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Even with sinners of a less flagrant sort, no communion was to be held. "If any man that is called a brother"—that is, claiming to be a Christian—"be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one you must not even eat." No doubt there is risk and difficulty in administering this law. The graver hidden sin may be overlooked, the more obvious and venial transgression be punished. But the duty of the Church to maintain its sanctity is undeniable, and those who act for the Church must do their best in spite of all difficulty and risk.

The prime duty, however, lies with the members, not with the rulers, in the Church. Those whose function it is to watch over the purity of the Church would be saved from all doubtful action were the

individual members alive to the necessity of holy living. This, they should bear in mind, is the very object of the Church's existence and of their being in it.

3. Thirdly, it is ever to be borne in mind that the true Church of Christ is to be found, not in one country nor in one age, not in this or that Church, whether it assume the title of "Catholic" or pride itself on being national, but is composed of "all that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Happily the time is gone by when with any show of reason any one Church can claim to be catholic on the ground of its being coextensive with Christendom. It is true that Cardinal Newman, one of the most striking figures and probably the greatest Churchman of our own generation, attached himself to the Church of Rome on this very ground: that it possessed this note of catholicity. To his eye, accustomed to survey the fortunes and growth of Christ's Church during the early and mediæval centuries, it seemed that the Church of Rome alone had any reasonable claim to be considered the Church catholic. But he was betrayed, as others have been, by confounding the Church visible with the Church invisible. No one visible Church can claim to be the Church catholic. Catholicity is not a matter of more or less; it cannot be determined by a majority. No Church which does not claim to contain the whole of Christ's people without exception can claim to be catholic. Probably there are some who accept this alternative, and do not see it to be absurd to claim for any one existing Church that it is coextensive with the Church of Christ.

4. The fourth note of the Church here implied is its unity. The Lord of all the Churches is one Lord; in this allegiance they centre, and by it are held together

in a true unity. Plainly this note can belong only to the Church invisible, and not to that multifarious collection of incoherent fragments known as the visible Church. It is indeed doubtful whether a visible unity is desirable. Considering what human nature is and how liable men are to be overawed and imposed upon by what is large, it is probably quite as conducive to the spiritual well-being of the Church that she is broken up into parts. Outward divisions into national Churches and Churches under different forms of government and holding various creeds would sink into insignificance, and be no more bewailed than the division of an army into regiments, were there the real unity which springs from true allegiance to the common Lord and zeal for the common cause rather than for the interests of our own particular Church. When the generous rivalry exhibited by some of our regiments in battle passes into envy, unity is destroyed; and indeed the attitude sometimes assumed towards sister-Churches is rather that of hostile armies than of rival regiments striving which can do most honour to the common flag. One of the hopeful signs of our times is that this is generally understood. Christian people are beginning to see how much more important are those points on which the whole Church is agreed than those often obscure or trivial points which split the Church into sects. Churches are beginning to own with some sincerity that there are Christian gifts and graces in all Churches, and that no one Church comprises all the excellences of Christendom. And the only outward unity that is worth having is that which springs from inward unity, from a genuine respect and regard for all who own the same Lord and spend themselves in His service.

Paul, with his usual courtesy and instinctive tact, introduces what he has to say with a hearty acknowledgment of the distinctive excellences of the Corinthian Church: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything ye have been enriched in Him, in all utterance and in all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you." Paul was one of those large-natured men who rejoice more in the prosperity of others than in any private good fortune. The envious soul is glad when things go no better with others than with himself, but the generous and unselfish are lifted out of their own woes by their sympathy with the happy. Paul's joy—and it was no mean or shallow joy—was to see the testimony he had borne to Christ's goodness and power confirmed by the new energies and capacities which were developed in those who believed his testimony. The gifts which the Christians in Corinth exhibited made it manifest that the Divine presence and power proclaimed by Paul were real. His testimony regarding the risen but unseen Lord was confirmed by the fact that those who believed this testimony and called upon the name of the Lord received gifts not previously enjoyed by them. Further argument regarding the actual and present power of the unseen Lord was needless in Corinth. And in our day it is the new life of believers which most strongly confirms the testimony regarding the risen Christ. Every one who attaches himself to the Church either damages or aids the cause of Christ, propagates either belief or unbelief. In the Corinthians Paul's testimony regarding Christ was confirmed by their reception of the rare gifts of utterance and knowledge. It is indeed somewhat ominous that the in-

corruptible honesty of Paul can only acknowledge their possession of "gifts," not of those fine Christian graces which distinguished the Thessalonians and others of his converts. But the grace of God must always adjust itself to the nature of the recipient; it fulfils itself by means of the material which nature furnishes. The Greek nature was at all times lacking in seriousness, and had attained little moral robustness; but for many centuries it had been trained to admire and excel in intellectual and oratorical displays. The natural gifts of the Greek race were quickened and directed by grace. Their intellectual inquisitiveness and apprehensiveness enabled them to throw light on the grounds and results of the Christian facts; and their fluent and flexible speech formed a new wealth and a more worthy employment in their endeavours to formulate Christian truth and exhibit Christian experience. Each race has its own contribution to make to complete and full-grown Christian manhood. Each race has its own gifts; and only when grace has developed all these gifts in a Christian direction can we actually see the fitness of Christianity for all men and the wealth of the nature and work of Christ, which can appeal to and best develop all.

Paul thanked God for their gift of utterance. Perhaps had he lived now, within sound of an utterance dizzying and ceaseless as the roar of Niagara, he might have had a word to say in praise of silence. There is more than a risk nowadays that talk take the place of thought on the one hand and of action on the other. But it could not fail to occur to Paul that this Greek utterance, with the instrument it had in the Greek language, was a great gift to the Church. In no other language could he have found such adequate, intelli-

gible, and beautiful expression for the new ideas to which Christianity gave birth. And in this new gift of utterance among the Corinthians he may have seen promise of a rapid and effective propagation of the Gospel. For indeed there are few more valuable gifts the Church can receive than utterance. Legitimately may we hope for the Church when she so apprehends her own wealth in Christ as to be stirred to invite all the world to share with her, when through all her members she feels the pressure of thoughts that demand utterance, or when there arise in her even one or two persons with the rare faculty of swaying large audiences, and touching the common human heart, and lodging in the public mind some germinant ideas. New epochs in the Church's life are made by the men who speak, not to satisfy the expectation of an audience, but because they are driven by an inward compelling force, not because they are called upon to say something, but because they have that in them which they must say.

But utterance is well backed by knowledge. Not always has it been remembered that Paul recognises knowledge as a gift of God. Often, on the contrary, has the determination to satisfy the intellect with Christian truth been reprehended as idle and even wicked. To the Corinthians the Christian revelation was new, and inquiring minds, could not but endeavour to harmonize the various facts it conveyed. This attempt to understand Christianity was approved. The exercise of the human reason upon Divine things was encouraged. The faith which accepted testimony was a gift of God, but so also was the knowledge which sought to recommend the contents of this testimony to the human mind.

But however rich in endowments the Corinthians were, they could not but feel, in common with all other

men, that no endowment can lift us above the necessity of conflict with sin or put us beyond the hazard which that conflict entails. In point of fact, richly endowed men are often most exposed to temptation, and feel more keenly than others the real hazard of human life. Paul therefore concludes this brief introduction by assigning the reason of his assurance that they will be blameless in the day of Christ; and that reason is that God is in the matter: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." God calls us with a purpose in view, and is faithful to that purpose. He calls us to the fellowship of Christ that we may learn of Him and become suitable agents to carry out the whole will of Christ. To fear that, notwithstanding our hearty desire to become of Christ's mind and notwithstanding all our efforts to enter more deeply into His fellowship, we shall yet fail, is to reflect upon God as either insincere in His call or inconstant. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. They are not revoked on further consideration. God's invitation comes to us, and is not withdrawn, even though it is not met with the hearty acceptance it deserves. All our obstinacy in sin, all our blindness to our true advantage, all our lack of anything like generous self-devotion, all our frivolity, and folly, and worldliness, are understood before the call is given. By calling us into the fellowship of His Son God guarantees to us the possibility of our entering into that fellowship and of becoming fit for it.

Let us then revive our hopes and renew our belief in the worth of life by remembering that we are called to the fellowship of Jesus Christ. This is satisfying; all else that calls us in life is defective and incomplete.

Without this fellowship with what is holy and eternal, all we find in life seems trivial or is embittered to us by the fear of loss. In worldly pursuits there is excitement; but when the fire burns out, and the cold ashes remain, chill and blank desolation is the portion of the man whose all has been the world. We cannot reasonably and deliberately choose the world; we may be carried away by greed, or carnality, or earthliness to seek its pleasures, but our reason and our better nature cannot approve the choice. Still less does our reason approve that what we cannot deliberately choose we should yet allow ourselves to be governed by and actually join in fellowship of the closest kind. Believe in God's call, listen to it, strive to maintain yourself in the fellowship of Christ, and every year will tell you that God, who has called you, is faithful and is bringing you nearer and nearer to what is stable, happy, and satisfying.

THE FACTIONS.

"Now I beseech you, **brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus** Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other."—**1 Cor. i. 10-16.**

III.

THE FACTIONS.

THE first section of this Epistle, extending from the tenth verse of the first chapter to the end of the fourth chapter, is occupied with an endeavour to quench the factious spirit which had shown itself in the Corinthian Church. Paul, with his accustomed frankness, tells the Corinthians from whom he had received information regarding them. Some members of the household of Chloe who were then in Ephesus were his informants. Chloe was evidently a woman well known in Corinth, and probably was resident there, although it has with some reason been remarked that it "is more in harmony with St. Paul's discretion to suppose that she was an Ephesian known to the Corinthians, whose people had been in Corinth and returned to Ephesus."[1] The danger of this factious spirit, which in subsequent ages has so grievously weakened the Church and hindered her work, seemed to Paul so urgent that he abruptly adjured them to unity of sentiment and of confession by that name which was at once "the bond of union and the most holy name by which they could be entreated." Before speaking of the important topics he wished to discuss, he must first of all give them to understand that he

[1] Evans.

does not write to a party, but seeks to win the ear of a whole and united Church.

The parties in the Corinthian Church had not as yet outwardly separated from one another. The members were known as belonging to this or that party, but they worshipped together and had not as yet renounced one another's communion. They differed in doctrine, but their faith in one Lord held them together.

Of these parties Paul names four. There were first of all those who held by Paul himself and the aspect of the Gospel he had presented. They owed to him their own salvation; and having experienced the efficacy of his gospel, they could not believe that there was any other efficacious mode of presenting Christ to men. And gradually they became more concerned to uphold Paul's authority than to help the cause of Christ. They probably fell into the mistake to which all mere partisans are liable, and became more Pauline than Paul himself, magnifying his peculiarities and attaching importance to casual sayings and private practices of his which were in themselves indifferent. There was apparently some danger that they might become more Pauline than Christian, should allow their indebtedness to Paul to obscure their debt to Christ, and should so pride themselves in the teacher as to neglect the thing taught.

There was a second party, grouped round Apollos. This learned and eloquent Alexandrian had come to Corinth after Paul left, and what Paul had planted he so successfully watered that many seemed to owe everything to him. Until he came and fitted the Gospel into their previous knowledge, and showed them its relations to other faiths, and opened up to them its ethical wealth and bearing on life, they had

been unable to make full use of Paul's teaching. He had sown the seed in their minds; they had owned the truth of his statements and accepted them; but until they heard Apollos they could not lay hold on the truth with sufficient definiteness, and could not boldly act upon it. The teaching of Apollos was not opposed to Paul's, but supplementary of it. At the end of this letter Paul tells the Corinthians that he had asked Apollos to revisit them, but Apollos had refused, and refused very probably because he was aware that a party had been formed in his name, and that his presence in Corinth would only foster and increase it. It is obvious therefore that there was no jealousy between Paul and Apollos themselves, whatever rivalry might exist among their followers.

The third party gloried in the name of Cephas; that is, Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision. It is possible that Peter had been in Corinth, but it is not necessary to suppose so. His name was used in opposition to Paul's as representing the original group of Apostles who had companied with the Lord in His lifetime, and who adhered to the observance of the Jewish law. How far the party of Cephas in Corinth indulged in disparagement of Paul's authority we cannot exactly say. There are indications, however, in the Epistle that they cited against him even his self-denial, arguing that he did not dare either to ask the Church to maintain him or to marry, as Peter had done, because he felt that his claim to be an Apostle was insecure. It may be imagined how painful it must have been for a high-minded man like Paul to be compelled to defend himself against such accusations, and with what mingled indignation and shame he must have written the words, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as

well as other Apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?" This party then had in it more dangerous elements than the party of Apollos. Extreme Judaizers would find among its members a soil prepared for their apparently conservative and orthodox but really obstructive and pernicious teaching.

Of the fourth party, which named itself "of Christ," we learn more in the Second Epistle than in the First. From a striking and powerful outburst in that Epistle (2 Cor. x. 7—xii. 18), it would appear that the Christ party was formed and led by men who prided themselves on their Hebrew descent (xi. 22), and on having learned their Christianity, not from Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, but from Christ Himself (1 Cor. i. 12; 2 Cor. x. 7). These men came to Corinth with letters of commendation (2 Cor. iii. 1), probably from Palestine, as they had known Jesus, but not from the Apostles in Jerusalem, for they separated themselves from the Petrine party in Corinth. They claimed to be apostles of Christ (2 Cor. xi. 13) and "ministers of righteousness" (xi. 15); but as they taught "another Jesus," "another spirit," "another gospel" (xi. 4), Paul does not hesitate to denounce them as false apostles and ironically to hold them up as "out-and-out apostles." As yet, however, at the date of the First Epistle, they had either not so plainly shown their true colours, or Paul was not aware of all the evil they were doing.

The Apostle hears of these four parties with dismay. What then would he think of the state of the Church now? There was as yet in Corinth no schism, no secession, no outward disruption of the Church; and indeed Paul does not seem to contemplate as possible

that which in our day is the normal condition: a Church broken up into little sections, each of which worships by itself, and looks upon the rest with some distrust or contempt. It did not as yet appear possible that the members of the one body of Christ should refuse to worship their common Lord in fellowship with one another and in one place. The evils attaching to such a condition of things may no doubt be unduly magnified; but we are probably more inclined to overlook than to magnify the mischief done by disunion in the Church. The Church was intended to be the grand uniter of the race. Within its pale all kinds of men were to be gathered. Distinctions were to be obliterated; differences were to be forgotten; the deepest thoughts and interests of all men were to be recognised as common; there was to be neither Jew nor Gentile, Greek nor barbarian, bond nor free. But instead of uniting men otherwise alienated, the Church has alienated neighbours and friends; and men who will do business together, who will dine together, will not worship together. Thus the Church has lost a large part of her strength. Had the kingdom of Christ been visibly one, it would have been supreme and without a rival in the world. Had there been union where there has been division, the rule and influence of Christ would have so far surpassed every other influence that peace and truth, right and justice, godliness and mercy, would have everywhere reigned. But instead of this the strength of the Church has been frittered away in civil strife and party warfare, her ablest men have spent themselves in controversy, and through division her influence has become insignificant. The world looks on and laughs while it sees the Church divided against itself and wrangling over petty differences

while it ought to be assailing vice, ungodliness, and ignorance. And yet schism is thought no sin; and that which the Reformers shuddered at and shrank from, that secession which they feared to make even from a Church so corrupt as that of Rome then was, every petty ecclesiastic now presumes to initiate.

Now that the Church is broken into pieces, perhaps the first step towards a restoration of true unity is to recognise that there may be real union without unity of external organization. In other words, it is quite possible that Churches which have individually a separate corporate existence—say the Presbyterian, Independent, and Episcopalian Churches—may be one in the New Testament sense. The human race is one; but this unity admits of numberless varieties and diversities in appearance, in colour, in language, and of endless subordinate divisions into races, tribes, and nations. So the Church may be truly one, one in the sense intended by our Lord, one in the *unity of the Spirit* and the bond of peace, though there continue to be various divisions and sects. It may very well be argued that, constituted as human nature is, the Church, like every other society or institution, will be the better of a competing, if not an opposing, rival; that schism, divisions, sects, are necessary evils; that truth will be more thoroughly investigated, discipline more diligently and justly maintained, useful activities more vigorously engaged in, if there be rival Churches than if there be one. And it is certainly true that, so far as man can foresee, there is no possibility, not to say prospect, of the Church of Christ becoming one vast visible organization. Oneness in that sense is prevented by the very same obstacles that hinder all States and governments on earth from being merged into one great kingdom.

But as amidst all diversities of government and customs it is the duty of States to remember and maintain their common brotherhood and abstain from tyranny, oppression, and war, so it is the duty of Churches, however separate in creed or form of government, to maintain and exhibit their unity. If the sects of the Church will frankly and cordially recognise one another as parts of the same whole, if they will exhibit their relationship by combining in good works, by an interchange of ecclesiastical civilities, by aiding one another when aid is needed, this is, I conceive, real union. Certainly Churches which see it to be their duty to maintain a separate existence ought to be equally careful to maintain a real unity with all other Churches.

Again, it is to be borne in mind that there may be real union without unity in creed. As Churches may be truly one though, for the sake of convenience or of some conscientious scruple, they maintain a separate existence, so the unity required in the New Testament is not uniformity of belief in respect to all articles of faith. This uniformity is desirable; it is desirable that all men know the truth. Paul here and elsewhere entreats his readers to endeavour to agree and be of one mind. It is quite true that the Church has gained much by difference of opinion. It is true that were all men to be agreed there might be a danger of truth becoming lifeless and forgotten for want of the stimulus it derives from assault, and discussion, and cross-questioning. It is undoubtedly the fact that doctrine has been ascertained and developed precisely in proportion and in answer to the errors and mistakes of heretics; and were all assault and opposition even now to cease, there might be some danger of a lifeless

treatment of truth ensuing. And yet no one can desire that men be in error; no one can wish heresies to multiply that the Church may be stimulated. A visitation of cholera may result in cleanliness and carefulness, but no one desires that cholera may come. Opposition in Parliament is an acknowledged service to the country, yet each party desires that its sentiments become universal. So, too, notwithstanding every good result which may flow from diversity of opinion regarding Divine truth, agreement and unanimity are what all should aim at. We may even see reason to believe that men will never all think alike; we may think that it is not in the nature of things that men of diverse natural disposition, diverse experience and upbringing, should think the same thing; if it is true, as a great thinker has said, that "our system of thought is very often only the history of our heart," then the effort to bring men to precise uniformity of thought is hopeless: and yet this effort must be made. No man who believes he has found the truth can forbear disseminating it to the utmost of his ability. If his favourite views are opposed in conversation, he does what he can to convince and make converts of his antagonists. There is truth, there is a right and a wrong, and it is not all the same whether we know the truth or are in error; and doctrine is simply truth expressed: and though the whole truth may not be expressed, yet even this partial expression of it may be much safer and nearer what we ought to believe than some current denial of the truth. Paul wishes people to believe certain things, not as if then they would be fully enlightened, but because so far they will be enlightened and so far defended against error.

But the question remains, What truths are to be made

terms of communion? Is schism or secession ever justifiable on the ground that error is taught in the Church?

This is a question most difficult to answer. The Church of Christ is formed of those who are trusting to Him as the power of God unto salvation. He is in communion with all who thus trust Him, whether their knowledge be great or small; and we cannot refuse to communicate with those with whom He is in communion. And it may very reasonably be questioned whether any part of the Church has a right to identify herself with a creed which past experience proves that the whole Church will never adopt, and which therefore necessarily makes her schismatic and sectarian. As manifestoes or didactic summaries of truth, confessions of faith may be very useful. Systematic knowledge is at all times desirable; and as a backbone to which all the knowledge we acquire may be attached a catechism or confession of faith is part of the necessary equipment of a Church. But no doctrinal error which does not subvert personal faith in Christ should be allowed to separate Churches. Theology must not be made more of than Christianity. We cannot pay too much attention to doctrine or too earnestly contend for the faith; we cannot too anxiously seek to have and to disseminate clear views of truth: but if we make our clear views a reason for quarrelling with other Christians and a bar to our fellowship with them, we forget that Christ is more than doctrine and charity better than knowledge.

Paul certainly was contemplating Christ, and not a creed, as the principle and centre of the Church's unity, when he exclaimed, "Is Christ divided?" The indivisible unity of Christ Himself is in Paul's mind the

sufficient argument for the unity of the Church. If you can divide the one Christ, and if one Church can live on one part, another on another, then you may have several Churches; but if there be one Christ indivisible, then is there but one Church indivisible. In all Christians and in all Churches the one Christ is the life of each. And it is monstrous that those who are vitally united to one Person and quickened by one Spirit should in no way recognise their unity.

It is with something akin to horror that Paul goes on to ask, "Was Paul crucified for you?" He implies that only on the death of Christ can the Church be founded. If those who prided themselves on being followers of Paul were in danger of exalting him into the place of Christ, they were forfeiting their salvation, and had no right to be in the Church at all. Take away the death of Christ and the personal connection of the believer with the crucified Redeemer, and you take away the Church.

From this casual expression of Paul we see his habitual attitude towards Christ; and more distinctly than from any laboured exposition do we gather that in his mind the pre-eminence of Christ was unique, and that this pre-eminence was based upon His crucifixion. Paul understood, and was never slow to affirm, the indebtedness of the young Christian Churches to himself: he was their father, and without him they would not have existed. But he was not their saviour, the foundation on which they were built. Not for one moment did he suppose that he could occupy towards them the position Christ occupied. That position was unique, altogether distinct from the position he occupied. No one could share with Christ in being the Head of the Church and the Saviour of the body. Paul did not

think of Christ as of one among many, as of the best among many who had done well. He did not think of Him as the best among renowned and useful teachers, as one who had added to what previous teachers had been building. He thought of His work as so transcending and distinct from the work of other men that it was with a kind of horror he saw that there was even a possibility of some confounding his own apostolic work with the work of Christ. He fervently thanks God that he had not even baptized many persons at Corinth, lest it should be supposed he had baptized them into his own name, and so implied, as baptism implies, that men were to acknowledge him as their leader and head. Had the chief part of Christ's work been its lesson in self-sacrifice, might not Paul's life have very well rivalled it, and might not those who had themselves seen the life of Paul and felt the power of his goodness have been forgiven if they felt more indebted to him than to the more remote Jesus?

The ever-recurring disposition then to reduce the work of Christ to the level of comparison with the work done for the race by other men must take account of this expression which reveals to us Paul's thought about it. Certainly Paul understands that between his work and the work of Christ an impassable gulf is fixed. Paul was wholly devoted to his fellow-men, had suffered and was prepared again to suffer any hardships and outrage in their cause, but it seemed to him monstrous that any person should confound the influence of his work with that of Christ's. And that which gave Christ this special place and claim was His crucifixion. We miss what Paul found in the work of Christ so long as we look more to His life than to His death. Paul does not say, Was Paul your teacher in

religion, and did he lead your thoughts to God? did Paul by his life show you the beauty of self-sacrifice and holiness? but "Was Paul crucified for you?" It was Christ's death for His people which gave Him the unique claim on their allegiance and devotedness. The Church is founded on the Cross.

It was not, however, the mere fact of His dying which gave Christ this place, and which claims the regard and trust of all men. Paul had really given his life for men; he had been more than once taken up for dead, having by the truth he taught provoked the hatred of the Jews, even as Jesus had done. But even this did not bring him into rivalry with the unapproachable Redeemer. Paul knew that in Christ's death there was a significance his own could never have. It was not only human self-sacrifice that was there manifested, but Divine self-sacrifice. It was as God's Representative Christ died as truly as He died as man's Representative. This Paul could not do. In Christ's death there was what there could be in none other: a sacrifice for the sins of men and an atonement for these sins. Through this death sinners find a way back to God and assurance of salvation. There was a work accomplished by it which the purest of men could not help Him in, but must himself depend upon and receive the benefit of. Christ by His death is marked off from all men, He being the Redeemer, they the redeemed.

This exceptional, unique work then—what have we made of it? Paul, probably on the whole the most richly endowed man, morally and intellectually, the world has seen, found his true life and his true self in the work of this other Person. It was in Christ Paul first learned how great a thing human life is, and it was through Christ and His work Paul first came into

fellowship with the true God. This greatest of men owed everything to Christ, and was so inwardly convinced of this that, heart and soul, he yielded himself to Christ, and gloried in serving Him. How is it with us? Does the work of Christ actually yield to us those grand results it yielded to Paul? Or is the greatest reality in this human world of ours wholly resultless so far as we are concerned? It filled Paul's mind, his heart, his life; it left him nothing else to desire: this man, formed on the noblest and largest type, found room in Christ alone for the fullest development and exercise of his powers. Is it not plain that if we neglect the connection with Christ which Paul found so fruitful, we are doing ourselves the greatest injustice and preferring a narrow prison-house to liberty and life?

THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING.

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."—1 Cor. i. 17-ii. 5.

IV.

THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING.

IN the preceding section of this Epistle Paul introduced the subject which was prominent in his thoughts as he wrote: the divided state of the Corinthian Church. He adjured the rival parties by the name of Christ to hold together, to discard party names and combine in one confession. He reminded them that Christ is indivisible, and that the Church which is founded on Christ must also be one. He shows them how impossible it is for any one but Christ to be the Church's foundation, and thanks God that he had given no pretext to any one to suppose that he had sought to found a party. Had he even baptized the converts to Christianity, there might have been persons foolish enough to whisper that he had baptized in his own name and had intended to found a Pauline, not a Christian, community. But providentially he had baptized very few, and had confined himself to preaching the Gospel, which he considered to be the proper work to which Christ had "*sent*" him; that is to say, for which he held an Apostle's commission and authority. But as he thus repudiates the idea that he had given any countenance to the founding of a Pauline party, it occurs to him that some may say, Yes, it is true enough, he did not baptize; but his preaching may

more effectually have won partisans than even baptizing them into his own name could have done. And so Paul goes on to show that his preaching was not that of a demagogue or party-leader, but was a bare statement of fact, garnished and set off by absolutely nothing which could divert attention from the fact either to the speaker or to his style. Hence this digression on the foolishness of preaching.

In this section of the Epistle then it is Paul's purpose to explain to the Corinthians (1) the style of preaching he had adopted while with them and (2) why he had adopted this style.

I. His time in Corinth, he assures them, had been spent, not in propagating a philosophy or system of truth peculiar to himself, and which might have been identified with his name, but in presenting the Cross of Christ and making the plainest statements of fact regarding Christ's death. In approaching the Corinthians, Paul had necessarily weighed in his own mind the comparative merits of various modes of presenting the Gospel. In common with all men who are about to address an audience, he took into consideration the aptitudes, peculiarities, and expectations of his audience, that he might so frame his arguments, statements, and appeals as to be most likely to carry his point. The Corinthians, as Paul well knew, were especially open to the attractions of rhetoric and philosophical discussion. A new philosophy clothed in elegant language was likely to secure a number of disciples. And it was quite in Paul's power to present the Gospel as a philosophy. He might have spoken to the Corinthians in large and impressive language of the destiny of man, of the unity of the race, and of the ideal man in Christ. He might have based all he

had to teach them on some of the accepted dicta or theories of their own philosophers. He might have propounded some new arguments for immortality or the existence of a personal God, and have shown how congruous the Gospel is to these great truths. He might, like some subsequent teachers, have emphasized some particular aspect of Divine truth, and have so identified his teaching with this one side of Christianity as to found a school or sect known by his name. But he deliberately rejected this method of introducing the Gospel, and "determined not to know anything among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." He stripped his mind bare, as it were, of all his knowledge and thinking, and came among them as an ignorant man who had only facts to tell.

Paul then in this instance deliberately trusted to the bare statement of facts, and not to any theory about these facts. This is a most important distinction, and to be kept in view by all preachers, whether they feel called by their circumstances to adopt Paul's method or not. In preaching to audiences with whom the facts are familiar, it is perfectly justifiable to draw inferences from them and to theorize about them for the instruction and edification of Christian people, Paul himself spoke "wisdom among them that were perfect." But what is to be noted is that for doing the work proper to the Gospel, for making men Christians, it is not theory or explanation, but fact, that is effective. It is the presentation of Christ as He is presented in the written Gospels, the narrative of His life and death without note or comment, theory or inference, argument or appeal, which stands in the first rank of efficiency as a means of evangelizing the world. Paul, ever moderate, does not denounce other methods of

presenting the Gospel as illegitimate; but in his circumstances the bare presentation of fact seemed the only wise method.

No doubt we may unduly press Paul's words; and probably we should do so if we gathered that he merely told his hearers how Christ had lived and died and gave them no inkling of the significance of His death. Still the least we can gather from his words is that he trusted more to facts than to any explanation of the facts, more to narration than to inference and theory. Certainly the neglect of this distinction renders a great proportion of modern preaching ineffective and futile. Preachers occupy their time in explaining how the Cross of Christ ought to influence men, whereas they ought to occupy their time in so presenting the Cross of Christ that it does influence men. They give laboured explanations of faith and elaborate instructions regarding the method and results of believing, while they should be exhibiting Christ so that faith is instinctively aroused. The actor on the stage does not instruct his audience how they should be affected by the play; he so presents to them this or that scene that they instinctively smile or find their eyes fill. Those onlookers at the Crucifixion who beat their breasts and returned to their homes with awe and remorse were not told that they should feel compunction; it was enough that they saw the Crucified. So it is always; it is the direct vision of the Cross, and not anything which is said about it, which is most effective in producing penitence and faith. And it is the business of the preacher to set Christ and Him crucified clear before the eyes of men; this being done, there will be little need of explanations of faith or inculcation of penitence. Make men see Christ, set the Crucified

clear before them, and you need not tell them to repent and believe; if that sight does not make them repent, no telling of yours will make them.

The very fact that it was a Person, not a system of philosophy, that Paul proclaimed was sufficient proof that he was not anxious to become the founder of a school or the head of a party. It was to another Person, not to himself, he directed the attention and faith of his hearers. And that which permanently distinguishes Christianity from all philosophies is that it presents to men, not a system of truth to be understood, but a Person to be relied upon. Christianity is not the bringing of new truth to us so much as the bringing of a new Person to us. The manifestation of God in Christ is in harmony with all truth; but we are not required to perceive and understand that harmony, but to believe in Christ. Christianity is for all men, and not for the select, highly educated few; and it depends therefore, not on exceptional ability to see truth, but on the universal human emotions of love and trust.

II. Paul justifies his rejection of philosophy or "wisdom" and his adoption of the simpler but more difficult method of stating fact on three grounds. The first is that God's method had changed. For a time God had allowed the Greeks to seek Him by their own wisdom; now He presents Himself to them in the foolishness of the Cross (vers. 17—25). The second ground is that the wise do not universally respond to the preaching of the Cross, a fact which shows that it is not wisdom that preaching appeals to (vers. 26—31). And his third ground is that he feared lest, if he used "wisdom" in presenting the Gospel, his hearers might be only superficially attracted by his persuasiveness

and not profoundly moved by the intrinsic power of the Cross (ii. 1—5).

1. His first reason is that God had changed His method. "After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Even the wisest of the Greeks had attained only to inadequate and indefinite views of God. Admirable and pathetic are the searchings of the noble intellects that stand in the front rank of Greek philosophy; and some of their discoveries regarding God and His ways are full of instruction. But these thoughts, cherished by a few wise and devout men, never penetrated to the people, and by their vagueness and uncertainty were incapacitated from deeply influencing any one. To pass even from Plato to the Gospel of John is really to pass from darkness to light. Plato philosophizes, and a few souls seem for a moment to see things more clearly; Peter preaches, and three thousand souls spring to life. If God was to be known by men generally, it was not through the influence of philosophy. Already philosophy had done its utmost; and so far as any popular and sanctifying knowledge of God went, philosophy might as well never have been. "The world by wisdom knew not God." No safer assertion regarding the ancient world can be made.

That which, in point of fact, has made God known is the Cross of Christ. No doubt it must have seemed foolishness and mere lunacy to summon the seeker after God away from the high and elevating speculations of Plato on the good and the eternal and to point him to the Crucified, to a human form gibbeted on a malefactor's cross, to a man that had been hanged. None knew better than Paul the infamy attaching to

that cursed death, and none could more distinctly measure the surprise and stupefaction with which the Greek mind would hear the announcement that it was there God was to be seen and known. Paul understood the offence of the Cross, but he knew also its power. "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

As proof that God was in their midst and as a revelation of God's nature, the Jews required a sign, a demonstration of physical power. It was one of Christ's temptations to leap from a pinnacle of the Temple, for thus He would have won acceptance as the Christ. The people never ceased to clamour for a sign. They wished Him to bid a mountain be removed and cast into the sea; they wished Him to bid the sun stand still or Jordan retire to its source. They wished Him to make some demonstration of superhuman power, and so put it beyond a doubt that God was present. Even at the last it would have satisfied them had He bid the nails drop out and had He stepped down from the Cross among them. They could not understand that to remain on the Cross was the true proof of Divinity. The Cross seemed to them a confession of weakness. They sought a demonstration that the power of God was in Christ, and they were pointed to the Cross. But to them the Cross was a stumbling-block they could not get over. And yet in it was the whole power of God for the salvation of the world. All the power that dwells in God to draw men out of sin to holiness and to Himself was actually in the

Cross. For the power of God that is required to draw men to Himself is not power to alter the course of rivers or change the site of mountains, but power to sympathize, to make men's sorrows His own, to sacrifice self, to give all for the needs of His creatures. To them that believe in the God there revealed, the Cross is the power of God. It is this love of God that overpowers them and makes it impossible for them to resist Him. To a God who makes Himself known to them in self-sacrifice they quickly and delightedly yield themselves.

2. As a second ground on which to rest the justification of his method of preaching Paul appeals to the constituent elements of which the Church of Corinth was actually composed. It is plain, he says, that it is not by human wisdom, nor by power, nor by anything generally esteemed among men that you hold your place in the Church. The fact is that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." If human wisdom or power held the gates of the kingdom, you yourselves would not be in it. To be esteemed, and influential, and wise is no passport to this new kingdom. It is not men who by their wisdom find out God and by their nobility of character commend themselves to Him; but it is God who chooses and calls men, and the very absence of wisdom and possessions makes men readier to listen to His call. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are; that no flesh should glory in His presence." It is all God's doing now;

it is "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus;" it is God that hath chosen you. Human wisdom had its opportunity and accomplished little; God now by the foolishness of the Cross lifts the despised, the foolish, the weak, to a far higher position than the wise and noble can attain by their might and their wisdom.

Paul thus justifies his method by its results. He uses as his weapon the foolishness of the Cross, and this foolishness of God proves itself wiser than men. It may seem a most unlikely weapon with which to accomplish great things, but it is God who uses it, and that makes the difference. Hence the emphasis throughout this passage on the agency of God. "God hath chosen" you; "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus;" "Of God He is made unto you wisdom." This method used by Paul is God's method and means of working, and therefore it succeeds. But for this reason also all ground of boasting is removed from those who are within the Christian Church. It is not their wisdom or strength, but God's work, which has given them superiority to the wise and noble of the world. "No flesh can glory in God's presence." The wise and mighty of earth cannot glory, for their wisdom and might availed nothing to bring them to God; those who are in Christ Jesus can as little glory, for it is not on account of any wisdom or might of theirs, but because of God's call and energy, they are what they are. They were of no account, poor, insignificant, outcasts, and slaves, friendless while alive and when dead not missed in any household; but God called them and gave them a new and hopeful life in Christ Jesus.

In Paul's day this argument from the general poverty and insignificance of the members of the Christian Church was readily drawn. Things are changed now;

and the Church is filled with the wise, the powerful, the noble. But Paul's main proposition remains : whoever is in Christ Jesus is so, not through any wisdom or power of his own, but because God has chosen and called him. And the practical result remains. Let the Christian, while he rejoices in his position, be humble. There is something wrong with the man's Christianity who is no sooner delivered from the mire himself than he despises all who are still entangled. The self-righteous attitude assumed by some Christians, the "Look at me" air they carry with them, their unsympathetic condemnation of unbelievers, the superiority with which they frown upon amusements and gaieties, all seem to indicate that they have forgotten it is by the grace of God they are what they are. The sweetness and humble friendliness of Paul sprang from his constant sense that whatever he was he was by God's grace. He was drawn with compassion towards the most unbelieving because he was ever saying within himself, There, but for the grace of God, goes Paul. The Christian must say to himself, It is not because I am better or wiser than other men that I am a Christian ; it is not because I sought God with earnestness, but because He sought me, that I am now His. The hard suspicion and hostility with which many good people view unbelievers and godless livers would thus be softened by a mixture of humble self-knowledge. The unbeliever is no doubt often to be blamed, the selfish pleasure-seeker undoubtedly lays himself open to just condemnation, but not by the man who is conscious that but for God's grace he himself would be unbelieving and sinful.

Lastly, Paul justifies his neglect of wisdom and rhetoric on the ground that had he used "enticing

words of man's wisdom" the hearers might have been unduly influenced by the mere guise in which the Gospel was presented and too little influenced by the essence of it. He feared to adorn the simple tale or dress up the bare fact, lest the attention of his audience might be diverted from the substance of his message. He was resolved that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; that is to say, that those who believed should do so, not because they saw in Christianity a philosophy which might compete with current systems, but because in the Cross of Christ they felt the whole redeeming power of God brought to bear on their own soul.

Here again things have changed since Paul's day. The assailants of Christianity have put it on its defence, and its apologists have been compelled to show that it is in harmony with the soundest philosophy. It was inevitable that this should be done. Every philosophy now has to take account of Christianity. It has shown itself to be so true to human nature, and it has shed so much light on the whole system of things and so modified the action of men and the course of civilization, that a place must be found for it in every philosophy. But to accept Christianity because it has been a powerful influence for good in the world, or because it harmonizes with the most approved philosophy, or because it is friendly to the highest development of intellect, may be legitimate indeed; but Paul considered that the only sound and trustworthy faith was produced by direct personal contact with the Cross. And this remains for ever true.

To approve of Christianity as a system and to adopt it as a faith are two different things. It is quite possible to respect Christianity as conveying to us a

large amount of useful truth, while we hold ourselves aloof from the influence of the Cross. We may approve the morality which is involved in the religion of Christ, we may countenance and advocate it because we are persuaded no other force is powerful enough to diffuse a love of law and some power of self-restraint among all classes of society, we may see quite clearly that Christianity is the only religion an educated European can accept, and yet we may never have felt the power of God in the Cross of Christ. If we believe in Christianity because it approves itself to our judgment as the best solution of the problems of life, that is well; but still, if that be all that draws us to Christ, our faith stands in the wisdom of men rather than in the power of God.

In what sense then are we Christians? Have we allowed the Cross of Christ to make its peculiar impression upon us? Have we given it a chance to influence us? Have we in all seriousness of spirit considered what is presented to us in the Cross? Have we honestly laid bare our hearts to the love of Christ? Have we admitted to ourselves that it was for us He died? If so, then we must have felt the power of God in the Cross. We must have found ourselves taken captive by this love of God. God's law we may have found it possible to resist; its threatenings we may have been able to put out of our mind. The natural helps to goodness which God has given us in the family, in the world around us, in the fortunes of life, we may have found too feeble to lift us above temptation and bring us into a really high and pure life. But in the Cross we at length experience what Divine power is; we know the irresistible appeal of Divine self-sacrifice, the overcoming, regenerating pathos of the Divine

desire to save us from sin and destruction, the upholding and quickening energy that flows into our being from the Divine sympathy and hopefulness in our behalf. The Cross is the actual point of contact between God and man. It is the point at which the fulness of Divine energy is actually brought to bear upon us men. To receive the whole benefit and blessing that God can now give us we need only be in true contact with the Cross: through it we become direct recipients of the holiness, the love, the power, of God. In it Christ is made to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. In very truth all that God can do for us to set us free from sin and to restore us to Himself and happiness is done for us in the Cross; and through it we receive all that is needful, all that God's holiness requires, all that His love desires us to possess

DIVINE WISDOM.

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"—1 Cor. ii. 6-iii. 4.

V.

DIVINE WISDOM.

IN the preceding paragraph Paul has explained why he had proclaimed the bare facts regarding Christ and His crucifixion and trusted to the Cross itself to impress the Corinthians and lead them to God, and why he had resisted the temptation to appeal to the Corinthian taste for rhetoric and philosophy by exhibiting Christianity as a philosophy. He believed that where conversion was the object of preaching no method could compare in efficiency with the simple presentation of the Cross. But sometimes he found himself in circumstances in which conversion could not be his object. He was occasionally called, as preachers in our own day are regularly called, to preach to those who were already Christians. And he tells us that in these circumstances, speaking "among the perfect," or in presence of fairly mature Christians, he made no scruple of unfolding the "wisdom" or philosophy of Christ's truth. To expound the deeper truths revealed by Christ was useless or even hurtful to mere "babes" in Christ or to those who as yet were not even born again; but to the adolescent and to those who might lay claim to have attained some firm manhood of Christian character, he was forward to teach all he himself knew. These words, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them

that are perfect," he makes the text of the following paragraph, in which he proceeds to explain (1) what the wisdom is; (2) how he speaks it; (3) to whom he speaks it.

I. First, the wisdom which he speaks among the perfect, though eminently deserving of the name, is not on a level with human philosophies, nor is it of a similar origin. It is not just one more added to human searches after truth. The princes of this world, its men of light and leading, have had their own theories of God and man, and yet have really "come to nought." The incompetence of the men and theories that actually control human affairs is put beyond a doubt by the crucifixion of Christ. In the person of Christ the glory of God was manifested as a glory in which man was to partake; had there been diffused among men any true perception of the real nature of God, the Crucifixion would have been an impossibility. The fact that God's incarnate glory was crucified is a demonstration of the insufficiency of all previous teaching regarding God. But the wisdom taught by Paul is not just one theory more, devised by the speculative ingenuity of man; it is a disclosure made by God of knowledge unattainable by human endeavour. The three great sources of human knowledge — seeing, hearing, and thought—alike fail here. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive," this wisdom. Hitherto it has been a mystery, a thing hidden; now God has Himself revealed it.

What the contents of this wisdom are, we can readily perceive from such specimens of it as Paul gives us in his Epistle to the Ephesians and elsewhere. It is a declaration of the Divine purpose towards man, or of

"the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Paul delighted to expatiate on the far-reaching results of Christ's death, the illustrations it gives of the nature of God and of righteousness, its place as the grand moral centre, holding together and reconciling all things. He delights to show the superiority of the Gospel to the Law and to build up a philosophy of history which sheds light on the entire plan of God's training of men. The purpose of God and its fulfilment by the death of Christ he is never weary of contemplating, nor of showing how out of destitution, and disease, and war, and ignorance, and moral ruin, and what seemed a mere wreck of a world there were to be brought by this one healing element the restoration of man to God and to one another, fellowship with God and peace on earth, in short a kingdom of God among men. He clearly saw how through all that had previously happened on earth and through all that men had thought preparation had been made for the fulfilment of this gracious purpose of God. These were "the deep things of God" which caused him to see how different was the wisdom of God from the wisdom of men.

This "wisdom" which Paul taught has had a larger and more influential place in men's minds than any other system of human thought. Christendom has seen Christ through Paul's eyes. He interpreted Christianity to the world, and made men aware of what had been and was in their midst. Men of the largest faculty, such as Augustine and Luther, have been unable to find a religion in Christ until they entered His school by Paul's door. Stumbling at one or two Jewish peculiarities which attach to Paul's theology, some modern critics assure us that, "after having been for

three hundred years"—and they might have said for fifteen hundred years—"the Christian doctor *par excellence*, Paul is now coming to an end of his reign." Matthew Arnold, with truer discernment, if not on sounder grounds, predicts that "the doctrine of Paul will arise out of the tomb where for centuries it has lain buried. It will edify the Church of the future. It will have the consent of happier generations, the applause of less superstitious ages. All will be too little to pay half the debt which the Church of God owes to this 'least of the Apostles, who was not fit to be called an Apostle, because he persecuted the Church of God.'"

We may find in Paul's writings arguments which, however convincing to the Jew, are not convincing to us; we may prefer his experimental and ethical to his doctrinal teaching; some estimable people can only accept him when they have purged him of his Calvinism, others shut their eyes to this or that which seems to them a blot in his writings; but the fact remains that it is to this man we owe our Christianity. It was he who disengaged from the dying body of Judaism the new-born religion and held it aloft in the eye of the world as the true heir to universal empire. It was he whose piercing intellect and keen moral discernment penetrated to the very heart of this new thing, and saw in it a force to conquer the world and to rid men of all bondage and evil of every kind. It was he who applied to the whole range of human life and duty the inexhaustible ethical force which lay in Christ, and thus lifted at one effort the heathen world to a new level of morality. He was the first to show the superiority of love to law, and to point out how God trusted to love, and to summon men to meet the trust

God thus reposed in them. We cannot measure Paul's greatness, because the light he has himself shed has made it impossible for us to put ourselves back in imagination into the darkness through which he had to find his way. We can but dimly measure the strength that was required to grasp as he grasped the significance of God's manifestation in the flesh.

Paul then used two methods of teaching. In addressing those who had yet to be won to Christ, he used the foolishness of preaching, and presented to them the Cross of Christ. In addressing those who had already owned the power of the Cross and made some growth in Christian knowledge and character, he enlarged upon the significance of the Cross and the light it threw on all moral relations, on God and on man. And even in this department of his work he disclaims any desire to propagate a philosophy of his own. The system of truth he proclaims to the Christian people is not of his own devising. It is not in virtue of his own speculative ability he has discovered it. It is not one of the wisdoms of this world, having its origin in the brain of an ingenious theorist. On the contrary, it has its origin in God, and partakes therefore of the truth and stability attaching to the thoughts of God.

II. But if it be undiscoverable by man, how does Paul come to know it? To the Corinthian intelligence there seemed but these three ways of learning anything: seeing, hearing, or thinking; and if God's wisdom was attainable by none of these, how was it reached? Paul proceeds to show how he was enabled to "speak" this wisdom. He does this in vers. 10—13, in which his chief affirmations are that the Spirit of God alone knows the mind of God, that this Spirit has been given

to him to reveal to him God's mind and to enable him to divulge that mind to others in suitable words.

1. The Spirit of God alone knows the mind of God and searches its deep things, just as none but the spirit of man which is in him knows the things of man. "There is in every man a life hidden from all eyes, a world of impressions, anxieties, aspirations, and struggles, of which he alone, in so far as he is a spirit—that is to say, a conscious and personal being—gives account to himself. This inner world is unknown to others, except in so far as he reveals it to them by speech."[1] And if we are baffled often and deceived regarding human character and find ourselves unable to penetrate to the "deep things" of man, to his inmost thoughts and motives, much more is it true that "the deep things" of God are wholly beyond our ken and are only known by the Spirit of God which is in Him. A vague and uncertain guess, possibly not altogether wrong, probably altogether wrong, is all we can attain to.

And still more certainly true is this of God's *purposes*. Even though you flatter yourself you know a man's nature, you cannot certainly predict his intentions. You cannot anticipate the thoughts of an able man whom you see designing a machine, or planning a building, or conceiving a literary work; you cannot say in what form a vindictive man will wreak his vengeance; nor can you penetrate through the abstracted look of the charitable and read the precise form his bounty will take. Every great work even of man comes upon us by surprise; the various inventions that facilitate business, the new poems, the new books, the new works of art, have never been conceived before. They

[1] Godet.

were hidden mysteries until the originating mind disclosed them. And much more were God's intentions and His method of accomplishing inconceivable by any but Himself. What God's purpose was in creating man, what He designed to accomplish through the death of Christ, what was to be the outcome of all human life, and temptation, and struggle—these things were God's secret, known only to the Spirit of God that was in Him.

2. This Spirit, Paul declares, was given to him, and revealed to him God's purposes, "the things which are freely given to us of God." He had received "not the spirit of the world," which would have enabled him only to theorize, and speculate, and create another "wisdom of this world;" but he had received "the Spirit which is of God," and this Spirit had revealed to him "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

We may think of revelation either as the act of God or as it is received by man. God reveals Himself in all He does, as man discloses his character in all he does. With God's first act therefore in the remotest past revelation began. As yet there was none to receive the knowledge of God, but God showed His nature and His purpose as soon as He began to do anything. And this revelation of Himself has continued ever since. In the world around us and the earth on which we live God reveals Himself; "the things which are made," as Paul says, "give us clearly to see and understand the invisible things of God, His unseen nature, from the creation of the world." Still more fully is God's nature revealed in man: in conscience, distinguishing between right and wrong; in the spirit craving fellowship with the Eternal. In the history

of nations, and especially in the history of that nation which founded itself upon its idea of God, He revealed Himself. By guiding it, by delivering it from Egypt, by punishing it, God made Himself known to Israel. And at length in Jesus Christ God gave the fullest possible manifestation of Himself. The veil was entirely lifted, and God came as much as possible into free intercourse with His creatures. He put Himself within reach of our knowledge.

But it was not enough that God be revealed objectively in Christ; there must also be a subjective revelation within the soul of the beholder. It was not enough that God be manifested in the flesh and men be allowed to draw such inferences as they could from that manifestation; but, in addition to this, God gave His Spirit to Paul and others that they might see the full significance of that manifestation. It was quite possible for men to be witnesses of the objective revelation without understanding it. The open eye is needed as well as outward light. And Paul everywhere insists upon this: that he had received his knowledge of Divine truth *by revelation*, not by the mere exercise of his own unaided thought, but by a spiritual enlightenment through the gift of God's Spirit.

The presence of God's Spirit in any man can of course only be verified by the results. God's Spirit working in and by means of man's nature cannot be known in separation from the man's spirit and the work done in that spirit. This inward revelation which Paul refers to is accomplished by the action of the Divine Spirit on the human faculties, quickening and elevating these faculties. The revelation or new knowledge acquired by Paul was given by God, but at the same time was acquired by Paul's own faculties, so

that it remained with him always, just as the knowledge we naturally acquire remains with us and can be freely used by us. An inward revelation can come to a man only in the form of impressions, convictions, thoughts arising in his own mind. Paul knew that his knowledge was a revelation of God, not by the suddenness with which it was imparted, not by supernatural appearances accompanying it, not by any sense or consciousness of another Spirit working with his own, but by the results. It is always the substance or contents of any revelation which proves its origin. Paul knew he had the mind of Christ because he found that he could understand Christ's words and work, could perfectly sympathize with His aims and look at things from Christ's point of view.

In their humility, many persons shrink from making this affirmation here made by Paul; they cannot ever unhesitatingly affirm that the Spirit of God is given them or that they have the mind of Christ. Such persons should recognise that it was the very humility of Paul which enabled him so confidently to affirm these things of himself. He knew that the knowledge of Christ's purposes he had and the sympathy with them were the evidence of God's Spirit working in him. He knew that without God's Spirit he himself could never have had these thoughts. And it is when we recognise our own insufficiency most that we are readiest to confess the presence of God's Spirit.

3. But Paul makes a further affirmation. Not only is the knowledge he has of Divine things a revelation made by God's Spirit to him, but the words in which he declares this revelation to others are taught him by the same Spirit: "which things we also speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which

the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." The meaning of these last words is doubtful. They either mean "fitting spiritual words to spiritual truths," or "applying spiritual truths to spiritual people." The sense of the passage is not materially altered whichever meaning is adopted. Paul distinctly affirms that as his knowledge is gained by God's revealing it to him, so his utterance of this knowledge is by the inspiration of God. The spirit of the world produces its philosophies and clothes them in appropriate language. The philosophies with which the Corinthians were familiar taught how the world was made and what man's nature is, and they did so in language full of technicalities and adorned with rhetorical devices. Paul disclaimed this; both his knowledge and the form in which he taught it were dictated, not by the spirit of this world, but by the Spirit of God. The same truths which Paul declared might have been declared in better Greek than he used, and they might have been embellished with illustrative matter and references to their own authors. This style of presenting Divine truth may have been urged upon Paul by some of his Corinthian hearers as far more likely to find entrance into the Greek mind. But Paul refused to allow his style to be formed by human wisdom and the literary methods of secular authors, and thought it more suitable to proclaim spiritual truth in spiritual language and in words which were taught him by the Holy Ghost.

This statement of Paul may be construed into a guarantee of the general accuracy of his teaching; but it was not intended to be that. Paul did not express himself in this way in order to convince men of his accuracy, still less to convince them that every word

he uttered was infallibly correct; what he intended was to justify his use of a certain *kind* of language and a certain *style* of teaching. The spirit of this world adopts one method of insinuating knowledge into the mind; the Spirit of God uses another method. It is the latter Paul adopts. That is what he means to say, and it is obvious that from this statement of his we can gather nothing regarding verbal inspiration or the infallibility of every word he spoke.

It might indeed seem a very simple and sound argument were we to say that Paul affirms that the words in which he embodies his teaching are taught him by the Holy Ghost, and that therefore there can be no error in them. But to interpret the words of any writer with no regard to his intention in writing them is voluntarily to blind ourselves to their true meaning. And Paul's intention in this passage is to contrast two methods of teaching, two styles of language, the worldly or secular and the spiritual, and to affirm that the style he adopted was that which the Holy Ghost taught him. An artist whose work was criticised might defend himself by saying, "I have been trained in the Impressionist school," or "I use the principles taught me by Ruskin," or "I am a pupil of this or the other great teacher;" but these replies, while quite relevant as a defence and explanation of the particular style of painting he has adopted, are not intended to identify the work of the scholar with that of the master, or to insinuate that the master is responsible for all the pupil does. Similarly Paul's reply is relevant as an explanation of his reason for refusing to use the methods of professional rhetoricians in teaching his spiritual truths. "Spiritual modes of presenting truth and an avoidance of rhetorical artifice and embellish-

ment accord better with what I have to say." Whoever gathers from this that every individual word Paul spoke or wrote is absolutely the best does so at his own risk and without Paul's authority. Certainly it was not Paul's intention to make any such statement. And it is quite as dangerous to put too much into Paul's words as to put too little.

III. Having shown that the wisdom he teaches is spiritual, and that his method of teaching it is spiritual, he proceeds finally to show that it can be taught only to spiritual persons. "The spiritual man judgeth all things;" he can discern whether he is "among the perfect" or among the carnal, whether he may speak wisdom or must confine himself to elementary truth. But, on the other hand, he himself cannot be judged by the carnal man. It is in vain that rudimentary believers find fault with Paul's method of teaching; they cannot judge him, because they cannot understand the mind of the Lord which guides him. It would have served no purpose to teach spiritual wisdom in Corinth, for the members of that Church were as yet only babes in Christ, carnal, and not spiritual. Their carnality was proved by their factiousness. They were still governed by the passions which rule the natural man. And therefore Paul fed them with milk, and not with strong meat; with the simple and affecting Gospel of the Cross, and not with those high and far-reaching deductions from it which he divulged among prepared and sympathetic spirits.

In the distinctions of men into natural, carnal, and spiritual Paul here show show untrammelled he was by theological technicalities, and how straight he looked at facts. He does not divide men summarily into believers and unbelievers, classing all believers as

spiritual, all unbelievers as carnal. He does not unchurch all who are not spiritual. He may be disappointed that certain members of the Church are carnal and are very slow in growing up to the maturity of Christian manhood, but he does not deny such carnal persons a place in the Church. He gives them time. He does not flatter them or deceive them as to their condition. He neither counts them as perfect nor repudiates them as unregenerate. He allows they are born again; but as the babe is apparently a mere animal, exhibiting no qualities of mind or heart, but only animal instincts, and yet by care and suitable nourishment develops into adult man, so the Christian babe may as yet be carnal, with very little to differentiate him from the natural man, yet the germ of the spiritual Christian may be there, and with care and suitable nourishment will grow.

The confidence which Paul here expresses regarding his superiority to the judgment of carnal men is a superiority inseparable from knowledge in any department. Truth carries with it always a self-evidencing power, and whoever attains a clear perception of truth in any branch of knowledge is aware that it is the truth he has attained. When the mind has been long puzzling over a difficulty and at last sees the solution, it is as if the sun had risen. The mind is at once convinced.

No one had ever greater right than Paul to say, "I have the mind of Christ." Every day of his life said the same thing. He at once entered into Christ's mind and more than any other man carried it out. It was by his moral sympathy with Christ's aims that he entered so completely into the knowledge of His person and work. He lived his way into the truth.

And all our best knowledge is reached in the same way. The truths we see most clearly and have deepest assurance of are those which our own experience has taught us. Spiritual truth is of a kind which only spiritual men can understand.

Spiritual men are those who can say, with Paul, "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." What men's eyes need especially to be opened to is the bounty of God and the consequent wealth and hopefulness of human life. Paul's wondering delight in God's grace and loving adaptation of Himself to human needs continually finds utterance in his writings. His own sense of unworthiness magnified the forgiving mercy of God. He rejoiced in a Divine love which was passing knowledge, but which he knew could be relied upon to the utmost. The vision of this love opened to his hope a vista of happiness. There is a natural joy in living that all men can understand. This life in many ways appeals to our thirst for happiness, and often it seems as if we needed nothing more. But, in one way or other, most of us learn that what is naturally presented to us in this world is not enough, indeed only brings in the long run anxiety and grief. And then it is that, by God's grace, men come to find that this life is but a small lagoon leading to, and fed by, the boundless ocean of God's love beyond. They learn that there is a hope that cannot be blighted, a joy that is uninterrupted, a fulness of life that meets and satisfies every instinct, and affection, and purpose. They begin to see the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, the things that are freely given to us of God—"freely given," given without desert of

ours, given to make us happy, given by a love that must find expression.

But to know and appreciate the things which are freely given to us of God a man must have the Spirit of God. For God's gifts are spiritual; they attach to character, to what is eternally ours. They cannot be received by those who refuse the severity of God's training and are not alive to the reality of spiritual growth, of passing from a carnal to a spiritual manhood. The path to these eternal, all-satisfying joys may be hard; Christ's path was not easy, and they who follow Him must in one form or other have their faith in the unseen tested. They must really, and not only in word, pass from dependence on this present world to dependence on God; they must somehow come to believe that underneath and in all we here see and experience lies God's unalterable, unmingled love, that ultimately it is this they have to do with, this that explains all.

How soon do men think they have exhausted the one inexhaustible, the love and resources of God; how quickly do men weary of life, and think they have seen all and known all; how ready are men to conclude that for them existence is a failure and can yield no perfect joy, while as yet they know as little of the things God has prepared for them that love Him as the new-born babe knows of the life and experiences that lie before it. You have but touched the hem of His garment; what must it be to be clasped to His heart? Happy they to whom the darkness of this world reveals the boundless distances of the starry heaven, and who find that the blows which have shattered their earthly happiness have merely broken the shell which confined their true life and have given them entrance into a world infinite and eternal.

GOD'S HUSBANDRY AND BUILDING.

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."—1 Cor. iii. 5-23.

VI.

GOD'S HUSBANDRY AND BUILDING

PAUL, having abundantly justified his method of preaching to the Corinthians, and having shown why he contented himself with the simple presentation of the Cross, resumes his direct rebuke of their party spirit. He has told them that they were as yet unfit to hear the "wisdom" which he taught in some Churches, and the very proof of their immaturity is to be found in their partisanship. "While one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?" The teachers by whose names they were proud to be known were not founders of schools nor heads of parties, who sought recognition and supremacy; they were "ministers," servants who were used by a common Lord to rouse faith, not in themselves, but in Him. Each had his own gifts and his own task. "I have planted." To me it was given to found the Church at Corinth. Apollos came after me, and helped my plant to grow. But it was God Himself who gave the vital influence requisite to make our work efficacious. Apollos and I are but one instrument in God's hand, as the man who sets the sails and he who holds the helm are one instrument used by the master of the ship, or as the mason who hews and the builder who

sets the stones in their places are one instrument for the carrying out of the masterbuilder's design. "We are fellow-labourers used by God; ye are *God's* husbandry, *God's* building."

Throughout this paragraph it is this thought that Paul dwells upon: that the Church is originated and maintained, not by men, but by God. Teachers are but God's instruments; and yet, being human instruments, they have each his own responsibility, as each has his own part of the one work.

From this truth that God alone is the Giver of spiritual life and that the Church is His building several inferences may be drawn.

1. Our praise for any good we have received of a spiritual kind should be given, not solely to men, but mainly to God. The Corinthians were conscious that in receiving Christianity they had received a very great boon. They felt that gratitude was due somewhere. The new thoughts they had of God, the consciousness of Christ's eternal love, the hope of immortality, the sustaining influence of the friendship of Christ, the new world they seemed to live in—all this made them think of those who had brought them this new happiness. But Paul was afraid lest their acknowledgment of himself and Apollos should eclipse their gratitude to God. People sometimes congratulate themselves on having adopted a good style of religion, not too sentimental, not sensational and spasmodic, not childishly external, not coldly doctrinal; they are thankful they lit upon the books they read at a critical time of their spiritual and mental growth; they can clearly trace to certain persons an influence which they know strengthened their character; and they think with gratitude and sometimes with excessive admiration of

such books and persons. Paul would say to them, It is not culpable to think with gratitude of those who have been instrumental in furthering your knowledge of the truth or your Christian life; but always remember that you are God's husbandry and God's building, and that it is to Him all your praise must ultimately go.

2. It is to God we must look for all further growth. We must use the best books; we must put ourselves under influences which we know are good for us, whatever they are for others; we must conscientiously employ such means of grace as our circumstances permit; but, above all, we must ask God to give the increase. No doubt the use of the means God uses to increase our life is a silent but constant prayer; still we are not mere trees planted to wait for such influences as come to us, but have wills to choose the life these influences bring and to open our being to the living God who imparts Himself to us in and through them.

3. If we are God's husbandry and building, let us reverence God's work in ourselves. It may seem a very ricketty and insecure structure that is rising within us, a very sickly and unpromising plant; and we are tempted to mock the beginnings of good in ourselves and be disappointed at the slow progress the new man makes in us. Vexed at our small attainment, at the poor show among Christians our character makes, at the stunted appearance the plant of grace in us presents, we are tempted to trample it once for all out of sight. Grace sometimes seems to do so little for us in emergencies, and the transformation of our character seems so unutterably slow and shallow, that we are disposed to think the radical change we need can never be accomplished. But different thoughts

possess us when we remember that this transformation of character is not a thing to be accomplished only by ourselves through a judicious choice and a persevering use of fit means, but is God's work. There may be little appearance or promise of good in you; but underneath the little there is lies what is infinitely great even the purpose and love of God Himself. "Ye are God's husbandry;" therefore hope becomes you. The deliverance of the human soul from evil, its redemption to purity and nobility—this is what engages all God's care and energy.

4. For the same reason we must hope for others as for ourselves. It is the foundation of all hope to know that God has always been inclining men to righteousness and will always do so. So often we look sadly at the godlessness, and frivolity, and deep degradation and misery that abound, and feel as if the burden of lifting men to a higher condition lay all upon us; the ceaseless flow of human life into and out of the world, the hopeless conditions in which many are born, the frightful influences to which they are exposed, the extreme difficulty of winning even one man to good, the possibility that no more may be won and that the Christian stock may die out—these considerations oppress the spirit, and cause men to despair of ever seeing a kingdom of God on earth. But Paul could never despair, because he was at all times convinced that the whole energy that ceaselessly goes forth from God goes forth to accomplish good, and nothing but good, and that among the good ends God is accomplishing there is nothing for which He has sacrificed so much and at which He so determinedly aims as the restoration of men to purity, love, and goodness.

5. But the chief inference Paul draws from the truth

that the Church is God's building is the grave responsibility of those who labour for God in this work. As for Paul's own part in the work, the laying of the foundation, he says that was comparatively easy. There was no chance of his making a mistake there. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Any teacher who professes to lay another foundation thereby gives up his claim to be a Christian teacher. If any one proceeds to lay another foundation than Christ, it is not a Christian Church he is meaning to build. He who does not proceed upon the facts of Christ's life and death, he whose instruction does not presuppose Christ as its foundation, may be useful for some purposes of life, but not as a builder of the Christian temple. He who teaches morality without ever hinting that apart from Christ it cannot be attained in its highest form may have his use, but not as a Christian teacher. He who uses the Christian pulpit for the propagation of political or socialist ideas may be a sound and useful teacher; but his proper place is the platform or the House of Commons or some such institution, and not the Christian Church. And the question at present, says Paul, is not what other institutions you may profitably found in the world, but how this institution of the Church, already founded, is to be completed. Other *foundation* no Christian teacher is proposing to lay; but on this foundation very various and questionable material is being built, in some instances gold, silver, and stones of value, in others wood, hay, stubble.

When Corinth rose from its ruins, it was no uncommon sight to see a miserable hovel reared against the marble wall of a temple or the splendid portico of some deserted palace rendered habitable by a patch-

work of mud and straw. What a recent visitor saw at Luxor may be accepted as to some extent true of Corinth: "Mud hovels, mud pigeon-towers, mud yards, and a mud mosque cluster like wasps' nests in and about the ruins. Architraves sculptured with royal titles support the roofs of squalid cabins. Stately capitals peep out from the midst of sheds in which buffaloes, camels, donkeys, dogs, and human beings herd together in unsavoury fellowship." So in Corinth the huge slabs of costly and carefully chiselled stone lay stable as the rock on which they rested, but now the glory of such foundations was dishonoured by squalid superstructures. And the picture in Paul's mind's eye of the Corinthian Church vividly suggested what he had seen while walking among those heterogeneous buildings. He sees the Church rising with a strange mixture of design and material. The foundation, he knows, is the same; but on the solid marble is reared a crazy structure of second-hand and ill-adapted material, here a wall propped up with rotten planking, there a hole stopped with straw, on one side a richly decorated gateway, with gold and silver profusely wrought into its design, on the other side a clay partition or loose boarding. It grieves him to see the incongruous structure. He sees the teachers bringing, with great appearance of diligence, the merest rubbish, wood, hay, stubble, apparently unconscious of the incongruity of their material with the foundation they build upon. He sees them taken with every passing fancy—the lifeless stubble that has lost its living seed of truth, the mud of the common highway, the readiest thoughts that come to hand—and setting these in the temple wall.

What would Paul say did he now see the super-

structure which eighteen hundred years have raised on the one foundation? Is any more heterogeneous structure anywhere to be seen than the Church of Christ? How obviously unworthy of the foundation is much that has been built upon it; how many teachers have laboured all their days at erecting what has already been proved a mere house of cards; and how many persons have been built into the living temple who have brought no stability or beauty to the building. How careless often have the builders been, anxious only to have quantity to show, regardless of quality, ambitious to be credited with largely extending the size of the Church apart from any consideration of the worth or worthlessness of the material added. As in any building, so in the Church, additional size is additional danger if the material be not sound.

The soundness of the material which has been built upon the foundation of Christ will, like all things else, be tested. "The day shall declare it;" that light of Christ's presence and dominance over all things, that light which shall penetrate all human things when our true life is entered on—*that* shall declare it. "The fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." The Corinthians knew what a trial by fire meant. They knew how the flames had travelled over their own city, consuming all that fire could kindle on, and leaving of the slightly built houses nothing but a charred and useless timber here and there, while the massive marbles stood erect among the ruins; and the precious metals, even though molten, were prized by the conqueror. Against the fire no prayer, no appeal, prevailed. Its judgment

and decisions were irreversible; wood, hay, stubble, disappeared: only what was solid and valuable remained. By such irreversible judgment are we and our work to be judged. We are to enter into a life in which the nature and character of the work we have done in this world shall bring upon it utter destruction or a rewarding and growing utility. Fire simply burns up all that will burn and leaves what will not. So shall the new life we are to pass into absolutely annihilate what is not in keeping with it, and leave only what is useful and congruous. There is no question here of admitting explanations, of adducing extenuating circumstances, of appealing to compassion, and so forth. It is a judgment, and a judgment of absolute truth, which takes things as they actually are. The work that has been well and wisely done will stand; foolish, vain, and selfish work will go. We are to pass through the fire.

Paul, with his unfailing discernment, accepts it as a very possible contingency that a Christian man may do poor work. In that case, Paul says, the man will be saved as by fire; his work shall be burned, but himself be scatheless. He shall be in the position of a man whose house has been burnt; the man is saved, but his property, all that he has slowly gathered round him and valued as the fruit of his labour, is gone. He may have received no bodily injury, but he is so stripped that he scarcely knows himself, and the whole thought and toil of his life seem to have gone for nothing. So, says Paul, shall this and that man pass into the heavenly state, hearing behind him as he barely enters the crash of all he has been building up as it falls and leaves for the result of a laborious life a ghastly, charred ruin and a cloud of dust. To have been

useless, to have advanced Christ's kingdom not at all, to have spent our life building up a pretentious erection which at last falls about our ears, to come to the end and find that not one solid brick in the whole fabric is of our laying, and that the world would have been quite as well without us—this must be humiliating indeed; but it is a humiliation which all selfish, worldly, and foolishly fussy Christians are preparing for themselves. To many Christians it seems enough that they be doing *something*. If only they are decently active, it concerns them little that their work is really effecting no good, as if they were active rather for the sake of keeping themselves warm in a chilling atmosphere than to accomplish any good purpose. Work done for this world must be such as will stand inspection and actually do the thing required. Christian work should not be less, but more, thorough.

There is a degree of carelessness or malignity sometimes to be found in those who profess to be Christian teachers which Paul does not hesitate unconditionally to doom. "If any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy." A teacher may in various ways incur this doom. He may in guiding some one to Christ fit him obliquely to the foundation, so that firm rest in Christ is never attained; but the man remains like a loose stone in a wall, unsettled himself and unsettling all around him. Any doctrine which turns the grace of God into licence incurs this doom. To lift stones from the mire they have been lying in and fit them into the temple is good and right, but to leave them uncleansed and unpolished is to disfigure the temple. Any teaching that does not recognise in Christianity the means of becoming holy, and encourages men to

believe themselves Christians though they neither have nor wish to have the Spirit of Christ, destroys the temple.

But we are responsible as well as our teachers for the appearance we present in God's temple. The stone that is to occupy a permanent place in a building is carefully squared and beaten into its place, and its level adjusted with the utmost nicety. Would it not make a very obvious change in the appearance and in the strength of the Church if every member of it were at pains to set himself absolutely true to Christ? There is no doubt a good deal of anxiety about our relation to Christ, frequent examining and measuring of our actual position; but does not this too often merely reveal that conscience is uneasy? Some persons are prevented from resting satisfactorily on Christ because of some erroneous opinion about faith or about the manner in which the connection is formed, or some pet theory or crotchet has possessed the mind and keeps them unsettled. Some will not rest on Christ until they have such repentance as they judge sufficient; others so rest on Him that they have no repentance. Strange that men will so complicate the simplicity of Christ, who is the hand of our heavenly Father, stretched out to lift us out of our sin and draw us to Himself! If you wish God's love, accept it; if you long for holiness, take Christ as your Friend; if you see no greater joy than to serve in His great cause, do His will and follow Him.

But, alas! with some it is no misunderstanding that prevents a close connection between the soul and Christ, but some worldly purpose or some entangling and deeply cherished sin. The foundation stone is as a polished slab of marble, having its upper surface

smooth as a mirror, whereas we are like stones that have been lying on the seashore, encrusted with shells and lichens, drilled with holes, grown all round and round with unsightly inequalities; and if we are to rest with entire stability on the foundation, these excrescences must be removed. Even a small one at one point is enough to prevent close adhesion. One sin consciously retained, one command or expression of Christ's will unresponded to, makes our whole connection with Him unsettled and insecure, our confessions and repentances untrue and hardening, our prayers hesitating and insincere, our love for Christ hollow, our life inconsistent, vacillating, and unprofitable.

And more must be done even after we are securely fitted into our place. Stones often look well enough when first built in, but soon lose their colour; and their surface and fine edges crumble and shale off, so that they need to be constantly looked to. So do the stones in God's temple get tarnished and discoloured by exposure. One sin after another is allowed to stain the conscience; one little corruption after another settles on the character, and eats out its fineness, and when once the fair, clean stone is no longer unsullied, we think it of little consequence to be scrupulous. Then the weather tells upon us: the ordinary atmosphere of this life, with its constant damp of worldly care and its occasional storms of loss, and disappointment, and social collisions, and domestic embroilment, eats out the heavenly temper from our character, and leaves its edges ragged; and the man becomes soured and irritable, and the surface of him, all that meets the casual eye, is rough and broken.

Above all, do not many Christian persons seem to

think it enough to have attained a place in the building, and, after spending a little thought and trouble on entering the Christian life, take no step onwards during the whole remainder of their lives? But it is in God's building as in highly ornamented buildings generally. The stones are not all sculptured before they are fitted into their places; but they are built in rough-hewn, so that the building may proceed: and then at leisure the device proper to each is carved upon it. This is the manner of God's building. Long after a man has been set in the Church of Christ, God hews and carves him to the shape He designs; but we, being not dead, but living, stones, have it in our power to mar the beauty of God's design, and indeed so distort it that the result is a grotesque and hideous monster, belonging to no world, neither of God nor of man. If we let a thousand other influences mould and fashion us, God's design must necessarily be spoiled.

The folly of partisanship and sectarianism is finally exhibited in the words "Let no man glory in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas." The man who held to Paul and would learn nothing from Apollos or Peter was defrauding himself of his rights. It has been the weakness of Christians in all ages, and never more than in our own, to see good in only one aspect of truth and listen to no form of teaching but one. The Broad Churchman despises the traditionalist; the Evangelical gathers up his skirts at the approach of a Broad Churchman. Calvinist and Arminian stand at daggers drawn. Each limits himself to his own fortress, which he thinks he can defend, and starves himself on siege rations while the fields wave white with grain outside. The eye is constructed to sweep round a wide range of vision; but men put

on blinkers, and decline even to look at anything which does not lie directly in the line of sight. We know that to confine ourselves to one form of food induces poverty of blood and disease, and yet we fancy a healthy spiritual life can be maintained only by confining ourselves to one form of doctrine and one way of looking at universal truth. To the Evangelical who shrinks with horror from liberal teaching, and to the advanced thinker who turns with contempt from the Evangelical, Paul would say, Ye do yourselves a wrong by listening to one form of the truth only; every teacher who declares what he himself lives on has something to teach you; to despise or neglect any form of Christian teaching is so far to impoverish yourselves. "All things are yours," not this teacher or that, in whom you glory, but all teachers of Christ.

His own expression, "all things are yours," suggests to Paul the whole wealth of the Christian, for whom exist not only all those who have striven to unfold the significance of the Christian revelation, but all things else, whether "the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come." As it is true of all teachers, of however commanding genius, that the Church does not exist for them that they may have a field for their genius, and followers to applaud and represent them, but that they exist for the Church, their genius being used for the advancement of the spiritual life of this and that unknown and hidden soul; so is it true of all things,—of life and all its laws, of death and all it leads to,—that these are ordained of God to minister to the growth of His children. This was the regal attitude which Paul himself assumed and maintained towards all events and the whole world of created things. He was incapable of defeat. The out-

rages and deaths he endured, he bore as proofs of the truth of his gospel. The storms of ill-will and persecution he everywhere encountered, he knew were only bringing him and his gospel more rapidly to all the world. And when he looked at last on the sword of the Roman executioner, he recognised it with joy as the instrument which by one sharp blow was to burst his fetters and set him free to boundless life and the full knowledge of his Lord. The same inheritance belongs to every one who has faith to take it. "All things are yours." The whole course of this world and all its particular incidents, the complete range of human experience from first to last, including all we shrink from and fear,—all are for the good of Christ's people. What thoughts flash from this man's mind. How his words still entrance and lift and animate the soul. "All things are ours." The catastrophes of life that seem finally to blot out hope, the wild elemental forces in whose presence frail man is as the moth, the unknown future of the physical world, the certain death that awaits every man and listens to no appeal, all things that naturally discourage and compel us to feel our weakness, —yes, says Paul, all these things are yours, serving your highest good, bringing you on towards your eternal joy, more certainly than the things you select and buy, or win, and cherish as your own. You are free men, supreme over all created things, for "ye are Christ's," you belong to Him who rules all, and loves you as His own; and above Christ and His rule there is no adverse will that can rob you of any good, for as ye are Christ's, cherished by Him, so is Christ God's, and the supreme will that governs all, governs all in the interests of Christ.

THE MINISTRY

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace: and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructers in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me."—1 Cor. iv. 1-16.

VII.

THE MINISTRY.

SO keenly alive is Paul to the danger and folly of party-spirit in the Church, that he has still one more word of rebuke to utter. He has shown the Corinthians that to give their faith to one teacher, and shut their ears to every other form of truth than that which he delivers, is to impoverish and defraud themselves. All teachers are theirs, and are sent, not to win disciples to themselves, who may spread their fame and reflect credit on their talents, but to serve the people, and be merged in self-obliterating toil. The preachers, Paul tells them, exist for the Church: not the Church for the preachers. The people are the primary consideration, the main end to which the preachers are subordinate. The mistake often made in things civil, that the people exist for the king, not the king for the people, is made also in things ecclesiastical, and has, in some instances, attained such dimensions that the "Church" means the clergy, not the laity, and that when a man enters the ministry he is said to enter the Church,—as if already he were not in it as a layman.

Paul now proceeds to demonstrate the futility of the

judgment passed upon their teachers by the Corinthians. Paul and the rest were servants of Christ, stewards sent by Him to dispense to others what he had entrusted to them. The question therefore was, were they faithful, did they dispense what they had received in conformity with Christ's purpose? The question was not, were they eloquent, were they philosophical, were they learned? Criticism no preacher need expect to escape. Sometimes one might suppose sermons were of no other use than to furnish material for a little discussion and pleasant exercise of the critical faculty. Every one considers himself capable of this form of criticism, and once a sermon has been sorted and labelled as of this, that, or the other quality, it is too often put permanently aside. In such criticism, Paul reminds us, it is a great matter to bear in mind that what has no great attraction for us may yet serve some good purpose. The gifts dispensed by Christ are various. The influence of some ministers is most felt in private, while others are shy and stiff, and can only utter themselves freely in the pulpit. In the pulpit again various gifts appear, some having good nerve and a ready and felicitous address which reaches the multitude; while others have more power of thought, and a finer literary gift, or a sympathetic manner of handling peculiarities of spiritual experience. Who shall say which of these styles is most edifying to the Church? And who shall say which teacher is most faithfully serving his Master? Who shall determine whether this preacher or that is the better steward, most truly seeking his Lord's glory, and careless of his own? May it not be expected that when the things at present hidden in darkness, the motives and thoughts of the heart, are brought to light

in Christ's judgment, many that are first shall be last, and the last first?

He who is conscious that he is the servant of Christ and must give account to Him, can always say with Paul, "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of man's judgment," whether for acquittal and applause or condemnation and abuse. He who utters what is peculiar to himself must expect to be misjudged by those who do not look at things from his point of view. A teacher who thinks for himself and is not a mere echo of other men, finds himself compelled to utter truths which he knows will be misunderstood by many; but so long as he is conscious that he is faithfully delivering what has been made known to himself, the condemnation of the many can trouble him very little or not at all. It is to his own Master he stands or falls; and if he feels sure that he is doing his Master's will, he may regret the opposition of men, but he can neither be greatly astonished nor greatly perturbed by it. And, on the other hand, the approval and applause of men come to him only as a reminder that there is no finality in man's judgment, and that it is only Christ's approval which avails to give permanent satisfaction. A sympathetic audience every teacher needs, but general approval will be his in the inverse ratio of the individuality of his teaching.

In his whole discussion of this subject Paul has named only himself and Apollos, but he means that what he has said of them should be applied to all. "These things I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another." But great difficulty has always been experienced in

tracing the similarities and distinctions which exist between the Apostles and the ordinary ministry of the Church, and had Paul been writing this epistle in our own day he would have felt himself compelled to speak more definitely on these points. For what makes union hopeless in Christendom at present is not that parties are formed round individual leaders, but that Churches are based on diametrically opposed opinions regarding the ministry itself. The Church of Rome unchurches all the rest, and defends her action by the simplest process of reasoning. There can be no true Church, she says, where there is no forgiveness of sins and no sacraments, and there can be no forgiveness and no sacraments where there are no true ministers to administer them, and there are no true ministers save those who can trace their orders to the Apostles. This theory of the ministry proceeds on the idea that the Apostles received from Christ a commission to exercise the apostolic office, and along with it a deposit of grace, with powers to communicate this to those who should succeed them. This deposit of grace derived from Christ Himself has been handed down from generation to generation, through a line of consecrated persons, each member of the series receiving at his ordination, and irrespective of his moral character, both the commission and the powers which belonged to his predecessor in office.

This theory of the efficacy of ministration in the Church, with its entirely external account of its transmission, is but one manifestation of the old superstition that confounds the outward symbol of Christian grace with that grace itself. It is a survival from a time in which religion was treated as a kind of magic, in which it was only needful to observe the right words of in-

cantation and the right outward order. Even supposing that any priest now alive could trace his orders back to the Apostles, which no priest can, is it credible that the mere observance of an outward form should secure the transmission of the highest spiritual functions to those who may or may not have any spirituality of mind? However much grace the ordaining bishop may himself possess, however many of the qualifications of a good minister of Christ he may have, he can transmit none of these by the laying on of his hands. He can confer the external authority in the Church which belongs to the office to which he ordains, but he cannot communicate that which fits a man to use this authority. The laying on of hands is the outward symbol of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, but it does not confer that Spirit, which is given, not by man, but by Christ alone. The laying on of hands is a fit symbol to use at ordination when those who use it have satisfied themselves that the ordained person is in possession of the Spirit. It is the expression of their reasonable belief that the Spirit is given.

In some Churches reaction against the theory of apostolical succession has led men to distrust and repudiate ordination altogether, and to maintain that any man may preach who can get people to listen to him, and may administer the sacraments to any who apply for them. No outward recognition by the Church is deemed necessary. The middle course is safer, which acknowledges not only the supreme necessity of an inward call, but also the expediency of an outward call by the Church. By an inward call it is meant that it is the inward and spiritual fitness of any person which constitutes his main right of entrance to the ministry. There are certain mental and moral endow-

ments, certain circumstances, and educational advantages, personal inclinations and leanings, which, when they meet in a boy or young man, point him out as suited for the work of the ministry. The evidence that Christ means that any one should take office in His Church,—in other words, calls him to office,—is the fact that He bestows on that person the gifts which fit him for it.

But besides this inward persuasion wrought in the mind of the individual, and which constitutes the inward call, there must be an outward call also by the Church's recognition of fitness and communication of authority. Any man who at his own instance and on his own authority gathers a congregation and dispenses the sacraments is guilty of schism. Even Barnabas and Paul were ordained by the Church. As in the State a prince though legitimate does not succeed to the throne without formal consecration and coronation, so in the Church there is needed a formal recognition of the title which any one claims to office. It is not the consecration which constitutes the prince's right; that he already possesses by birth: so, neither is it the Church's ordination which qualifies and entitles the minister to his office; this he already has by the gift of Christ; but recognition by the Church is needed to give him due authority to exercise the functions of his office. It is a matter of expediency and of order. It is calculated to maintain the unity of the Church. Admission to the ministry being regulated by those already in office, schisms are less likely to occur. Ordination has been a bulwark against fanaticism, against foolish private opinions and doctrines, against divisive courses in worship and in organization. If the Church was to be kept together

and to grow as a consistent whole, it was necessary that those already in office should be allowed to scrutinize the claims of aspirants to office, and should not have their order invaded, their work thwarted and obstructed, their doctrine denied and contradicted by every one who might profess to have an inward call to the ministry.

It would therefore seem to be every one's duty to inquire, before he gives himself to another profession or business, whether Christ is not claiming him to serve in His Church. The qualifications which constitute a call to the ministry are such as these: an interest in men, in their ways, and habits, and character; a social disposition, inclining you to mix with other people, to take pleasure in their thoughts and feelings, to be of service to them, to talk frankly with them; a liking for reading, if not for hard study; some capacity for thinking and arranging your thoughts and expressing them, which, however, is to so great an extent the result of study and practice that you may find it impossible to say whether you have it or not. There are negative qualifications equally important, such as an indifference to money-making, a shrinking from the eager competition and hurry of a business life. And, above all, there are the deeper and essential qualifications which are the fruit of the Spirit's sanctifying energy: some genuine sense of your indebtedness to Christ; a strong desire to serve Him; an ambition to preach Him, to proclaim His worth, to invite men to appreciate and love Him. If you have these desires, and if you would fain be of use in things spiritual to your fellow-men, then it would seem that you are called by Christ to the ministry. I do not say that all ministers are so qualified, but only that any one who

is so qualified should be careful how he chooses some other calling in preference to the ministry.

Paul concludes this portion of his Epistle with a pathetic comparison of his condition as an Apostle with the condition of those in Corinth who were glorying in this or that teacher. They spoke as if they needed his instructions no more, and as if already they had attained the highest Christian advantages. "Already ye are full; already ye are rich: ye have reigned as kings without us." They behave as if all the trial of the Christian life were over. With the frothy spirit of young converts, they are full of a triumph which they despise Paul for not inculcating. By one leap they had attained, or thought they had attained, a superiority to all disturbance, and to all trial, and to all need of teaching, which, in fact, as Paul's own experience taught him, could only be attained in another life. While they thus triumphed, he who had begotten them in Christ was being treated as the offscouring and filth of the world.

Paul can only compare himself and the other Apostles to those gladiators who were condemned to die, and who came into the arena last, after the spectators had been sated with other exhibitions and bloodless performances. "I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death. For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men." They came into the arena knowing they should never leave it alive, that they were there for the purpose of enduring the worst their enemies could do to them. It was no fight with buttoned foils Paul and the rest were engaged in. While others sat comfortably looking on, with curtains to shade them from the heat and refreshments to save

them from exhaustion or from faintness at the sight of blood, they were in the arena, exposed to wounds, ill-usage, and death. They had as little hope of retiring to live a quiet life as the gladiators who had said farewell to their friends and saluted the Emperor as those about to die. Life became no easier, the world no kinder, to Paul as time went on. "Even unto this present hour of writing," he says, "we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place." Here is the finest mind, the noblest spirit, on earth; and this is how he is treated: driven from place to place, thrust aside as interrupting the proper work of men, passed by with a sneer at his rags, refused the commonest charity, paid for his loving words in blows and insolence. And yet he goes on with his work, and lets nothing interrupt that. "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat." Nay, it is a life which he is so far from giving up himself, that he will call to it the easy-going Christians of Corinth. "I beseech you," he says, "be ye followers of me."

And if the contrast between Paul's precarious and self-sacrificing life and the luxurious and self-complacent life of the Corinthians might be expected to shame them into some vigorous Christian service, a similar contrast candidly considered may accomplish some good results in us. Already the Corinthians were accepting that pernicious conception of Christianity which looks upon it as merely a new luxury, that they who are already comfortable in all outward respects may be comforted in spirit as well and purge their minds from all anxieties, questionings, and strivings. They recognised how happy a thing it is to be forgiven, to be at peace with God, to have

a sure hope of life everlasting. For them the battle was over, the conquest won, the throne ascended. As yet they had not caught a glimpse of what is involved in becoming holy as Christ is holy, nor had steadily conceived in their minds the profound inward change which must pass upon them. As yet it was enough for them that they were called to be God's children, provided for by a heavenly Father; and Christ's own view of life and of men had not yet possessed or even dawned upon their soul, causing them to feel that until they could live for others they had no true life.

Are there none still who listen to Christianity rather as a voice soothing their fears than as a bugle summoning them to conflict, who are satisfied if through the Gospel they are enabled to comfort their own soul, and who do not yet respond to Christ's call to live under the power of that Spirit of His which prompted Him to all sacrifice? Paul does not summon the whole Church to be homeless, destitute, comfortless, outcast from all joy; and yet there is meaning in his words when he says, "Be ye followers of me." He means that there is not one standard of duty for him and another for us. All is wrong with us until we be made somehow to recognise, and make room in our life for the recognition, that we have no right to be lapping ourselves round with all manner of selfish aggrandizement while Paul is driven through life with scarcely one day's bread provided, that in some way intelligible to our own conscience we must approve ourselves to be his followers, and that no right is secured to any class of Christians to stand selfishly aloof from the common Christian cause. If we be Christ's, as Paul was, it must inevitably come

to this with us: that we cordially yield to Him all we are and have; our very selves, with all our tastes and aptitudes and with all we have made by our toil; our life, with all its fruits, we gladly yield to Him. If our hearts be His, this is inevitable and delightful; unless they be so, it is impossible, and seems extravagant. It is vain to say to a man, Serve only yourself in life, seek only to make a reputation for yourself and gather comforts round yourself, and make it the aim of your life to be comfortable and respectable—it is vain to bid a man thus limit and impoverish his life if at the same time you show him a person so attracting human allegiance as Christ does, and so opening to men wider and eternal aims as He does, and if you show him a cause so kindling every right ambition as Christ's cause does.

It was Christ's own self-sacrifice that threw such a spell over the Apostles and gave them so new a feeling towards their fellow-men and so new an estimate of their deepest needs. After seeing how Christ lived, they could never again justify themselves in living for self. After seeing His regardlessness of bodily comfort, His superiority to traditional necessities and customary luxuries, after witnessing how veritably He was but passing through this world, and used it as the stage on which He might serve God and men, and counted His life best spent in giving it for others, they could not settle down into the old life and aim only at passing comfortably, reputably, and religiously through it. That view of life was made for ever impossible to them. The life of Christ had made a new way for itself into a new region, and the horizon rent by the passage never again closed to them. That life became the only spiritual reality to them. And it is because

we are so sunk in self-seeking and worldliness, and so blinded by the customs and traditional ideas about spending life, about acquitting ourselves well and making a name, about earning a competence, about everything which turns the regard in upon self instead of outwards upon objects worthy of our exertion—it is therefore that we continue so unapostolic, so unprofitable, so unchanged.

It might encourage us to bring our life more nearly into the line of Paul's were we to see clearly that the cause he served is really inclusive of all that is worth working for. We can scarcely apprehend this with any clearness without feeling some enthusiasm for it. The *kind* of devotedness expected of the Christian is illustrated in the lives of all men of any force of character; the Christian's devotedness is only given to a larger and more reasonable object. There have been statesmen and patriots, and there still are such, who, though possibly not absolutely devoid of some taint of selfish ambition, are yet in the main devoted to their country; its interests are continually on their mind and heart, their time is given wholly to it, and their own personal tastes and pursuits are held in abeyance and abandoned to make room for more important labour. You have seen men become so enamoured of a cause that they will literally sell all they have to forward it, and who obviously have it on their hearts by night and by day, who live for that and for nothing else; you can detect as often as you meet them that the real aim and object of their life is to promote that cause. Some new movement, political or ecclesiastical, some literary scheme, some fresh enterprise of benevolence, some new commercial idea, or no matter what it is, you have seen again and again that

men throw themselves so thoroughly into such causes that they cannot be said to be living for themselves. They will part with time, with property, with other important objects, with health, even with life itself, for the sake of their cherished, chosen cause. And when such a cause is worthy, such as the reformation of prison discipline, or the emancipation of slaves, or the liberating of an oppressed nation, the men who adopt it seem to lead the only lives which have some semblance of glory in them; and the sacrifices they make, the obloquy they incur, the toils they endure, make the heart burn and swell as we hear of them. Every one instinctively acknowledges that such self-forgetful and heroic lives are the right and model lives for all. What a man does for himself is jealously examined, criticised, and passed at the most with an exclamation of wonder; but what he does for others is welcomed with acclamation as an honour to our common humanity. So long as a man labours merely for himself, to win himself a name, to get for himself a possession, he makes no valuable contribution to the world's good, and only by accident effects anything for which other men are thankful; but let a man even with small means at his command have the interests of others at his heart, and he sets in motion endless agencies and influences that bless whatever they touch.

It is this then that our Lord does for us by claiming our service; He gives us the opportunity of sinking our selfishness, which is in the last analysis our sin, and of living for a worthier object than our own pleasure or our own careful preservation. When He tells us to live for Him and to seek the things that are His, He but tells us in other words and in a more attractive and practical form to seek the common good.

We seek the things that are Christ's when we act as Christ would act were He in our place, when we let Christ live through us, when we, by considering what He would have us do, let His influence still tell on the world and His will still be done in the world. This should be so done by each and every Christian that the result would be the same as if Christ had personally at command all the resources for good that are possessed by His people, as if He were Himself expending all the money, energy, and time that are being expended by His people, so that at every point where there is a Christian Christ's purposes might be being forwarded. This is the devotedness we are called to; this is the devotedness we must cultivate until we do make some considerable attainment in it.

EXCOMMUNICATION; OR, PURGING OUT THE OLD LEAVEN.

"For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church. Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?"

"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."—1 Cor. iv. 17. v. 13.

VIII.

EXCOMMUNICATION; OR, PURGING OUT THE OLD LEAVEN.

FROM the subject of the factions in the Corinthian Church, which has so long detained Paul, he now passes to the second division of his Epistle, in which he speaks of the relation the Christians should hold to the heathen population around them. The transition is easy and such as befits a letter. Paul had thought it advisable to send Timothy, who perfectly understood his mind, and could represent his views more fully than a letter; but it now occurred to him that this might be construed by some of the vain popular leaders in the Church into a timorous reluctance on his part to appear in Corinth and a sign that they were no longer to be held in check by the strong hand of the Apostle. "Some are puffed up, as though *I* would not come to you." He assures them therefore that he himself will come to Corinth, and also that the leaders of the Church have little reason to be puffed up, seeing that they have allowed in the Church an immorality so gross that even the lower standard of pagan ethics regards it as an unnameable abomination, and if once it is named, it is only to say that not all the waters of ocean can wash away such guilt. Instead of being puffed up, Paul tells them, they should rather

be ashamed and at once take steps to put away from them so great a scandal. If not, he must come, not in meekness and love, but with a rod.

The Corinthian Church had fallen into a common snare. Churches have always been tempted to pique themselves on their rich foundations and institutions, on producing champions of the faith, able writers, eloquent preachers, on their cultured ministry, on their rich and æsthetic services, and not on that very thing for which the Church exists: the cleansing of the morals of the people and their elevation to a truly spiritual and godly life. And it is the individuals who give character to any Church. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Each member of a Church in each day's conduct in business and at home stakes, not only his own reputation, but the credit of the Church to which he belongs. Involuntarily and unconsciously men lower their opinion of the Church and cease to expect to find in her a fountain of spiritual life, because they find her members selfish and greedy in business, ready to avail themselves of doubtful methods; harsh, self-indulgent, and despotic at home, tainted with vices condemned by the least educated conscience. Let us remember that our little leaven leavens what is in contact with us; that our worldliness and unchristian conduct tend to lower the tone of our circle, encourage others to live down to our level, and help to demoralize the community.

In the judgment Paul pronounces on the Corinthian culprit two points are important. First, it is noteworthy that Paul, Apostle though he was, did not take the case out of the hands of the congregation. His own judgment on the case was explicit and

decided, and this judgment he does not hesitate to declare; but, at the same time, it is the congregation which must deal with the case and pronounce judgment in it. The excommunication he enjoined was to be their act. "Put away from among yourselves," he says (v. 13), "that wicked person." The government of the Church was in Paul's idea thoroughly democratic; and where the power to excommunicate has been lodged in a priesthood, the results have been deplorable. Either, on the one hand, the people have become craven and have lived in terror, or, on the other hand, the priest has been afraid to measure his strength with powerful offenders. In our own country and in others this power of excommunication has been abused for the most unworthy purposes, political, social, and private; and only when it is lodged in the congregation can you secure a fair judgment and moral right to enforce it. There is little fear that this power will nowadays be abused. Men themselves conscious of strong propensities to evil and of many sins are more likely to be lax in administering discipline than forward to use their power; and so far from ecclesiastical discipline producing in its administrators harsh, tyrannical, and self-righteous feelings, it rather works an opposite effect, and evokes charity, a sense of solemn responsibility, and the longing for the welfare of others which lies latent in Christian minds.

But, second, the precise punishment intended by Paul is couched in language which the present generation cannot readily understand. The culprit is not only to be excluded from Christian communion, but "to be delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved." Many meanings

have been put upon these words; but after all has been said, the natural and obvious meaning of the words asserts itself. Paul believed that certain sins were more likely to be cured by bodily suffering than by any other agency. Naturally sins of the flesh belonged to this class. Bodily suffering of some kinds he believed to be the infliction of Satan. Even his own thorn in the flesh he spoke of as a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him. He expected also that the judgment pronounced by himself and the congregation on this offender would be given effect to in God's providence; and accordingly he bids the congregation hand the man over to this disciplinary suffering, not as a final doom, but as the only likely means of saving his soul.[1] If the offender mentioned in the Second Epistle is the same man, then we have evidence that the discipline was effectual, that the sinner did repent and was overwhelmed with shame and sorrow. Certainly such an experience of punishment, though not invariably or even commonly effectual, is in itself calculated to penetrate to the very depth of a man's spirit and give him new thoughts about his sin. If when suffering he can acknowledge his own wrong-doing as the cause of his misery and accept all the bitter and grievous penalties his sin has incurred, if he can truly humble himself before God in the matter and own that all he suffers is right and good, then he is nearer the kingdom of heaven than ever he was before. Substantially the same idea as Paul's is put in the mouth of the Pope by the most modern of poets:—

[1] Some account of the Jewish and other forms of excommunication is given in the *Encycl. Brit.*, art. Excommunication. Milman's *History of the Jews*, Book XIX., should also be consulted, and the *Pontificale Romanum*.

"For the main criminal I have no hope
Except in such a suddenness of fate.
I stood at Naples once, a night so dark,
I could have scarce conjectured there was earth
Anywhere, sky, or sea, or world at all,
But the night's black was burst through by a blaze;
Thunder struck blow on blow; Earth groaned and bore,
Through her whole length of mountain visible:
There lay the city thick and plain with spires,
And, like a ghost disshrouded, white the sea.
So may the truth be flashed out by one blow,
And Guido see one instant and be saved."

The necessity for keeping their communion pure, for being a society with no leaven of wickedness among them, Paul proceeds to urge and illustrate in the words, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us purge out the old leaven." The allusion was of course much more telling to Jews than it can possibly be to us; still, if we call to mind the outstanding ideas of the Passover, we cannot fail to feel the force of the admonition. That must be the simplest explanation of the Passover which Jewish parents were enjoined to give to their children, in the words, "By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage. And it came to pass when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, with the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all the firstborn being males, but all the firstborn of my children I redeem." That is to say, all the firstborn of animals they sacrificed to God, slaying them on His altar, but instead of slaying the human firstborns they redeemed them by sacrificing a lamb in their stead. The whole transaction of the night of the first Passover stood

thus: God claimed the Israelites as His people; the Egyptians also claimed them as theirs. And as no warning would persuade the Egyptians to let them away to serve God, God at last forcibly delivered them, slaying the flower of the Egyptian people, and so crippling and dismaying them as to give Israel opportunity of escape. Being thus rescued that they might be God's people, they felt bound to continue to own this; and in accordance with the custom of their time they expressed their sense of it by sacrificing their firstborn, by presenting them to God as belonging to Him. By this outward sacrificial act engaged in by every family it was acknowledged that the whole nation belonged to God.

Christ, then, is our Passover or Paschal Lamb, in the first place, because through Him there is made the acknowledgment that we belong to God. He is in very truth the prime and flower, the best representative of our race, the firstborn of every creature. He is the one who can make for all others this acknowledgment that we are God's people. And He does so by perfectly giving Himself up to God. This fact that we belong to God, that we men are His creatures and subjects, has never been perfectly acknowledged save by Christ. No individual or society of people has ever lived entirely for God. No man has ever fully recognised this apparently simple truth, that we are not our own, but God's. The Israelites made the acknowledgment in form, by sacrifice, but Christ alone made it in deed by giving Himself up wholly to do God's will. The Israelites made the acknowledgment from time to time, and with probably more or less truthfulness and sincerity, but Christ's whole spirit and habitual temper of mind was that of perfect obedience and dedication.

Only those of us, then, who see that we ought to live for God can claim Christ as our representative. His dedication to God is unmeaning to us if we do not desire to belong entirely to God. If He is our Passover, the meaning of this is that He gives us liberty to serve God; if we do not mean to be God's people, if we do not resolutely purpose to put ourselves at God's disposal, then it is idle and false of us to talk of Him as our Passover. Christ comes to bring us back to God, to redeem us from all that hinders our serving Him; but if we really prefer being our own masters, then manifestly He is useless to us. It is no matter what we *say*, nor what rites and forms we go through; the one question is, Do we at heart wish to give ourselves up to God? Does Christ really represent us,—represent, by His devoted unworldly life, our earnest and hearty desire and intention? Do we find in His life and death, in His submission to God and meek acceptance of all God appointed, the truest representation of what we ourselves would fain be and do, but cannot?

It is through this *self-sacrifice* of Christ that we can become God's people, and enjoy all the liberties and advantages of His people. Christ becomes the representative of all whose state of mind His sacrifice represents. If we would fain be of one mind and will with God as Christ was, if we feel the degradation and bitterness of failing God and disappointing the trust He has confided in us His children, if our life is wholly spoiled by the latent feeling that all is wrong because we are not in harmony with the wise and holy and loving Father, if we feel with more and more distinctness, as life goes on, that there is a God, and that the foundation of all happiness and soundness of

life must be laid in union with Him, then Christ's perfect surrender of Himself to the will of the Father represents what we would but cannot ourselves achieve. When the Israelite came with his lamb, feeling the attractiveness and majesty of God, and desiring to pour his whole life out in fellowship with God and service of Him, as entirely as the life of the lamb was poured out at the altar, God accepted this symbolic utterance of the worshipper's heart. As the worshipping Israelite saw in the animal yielding its whole life the very utterance of his own desire, and said, Would God I could as freely and entirely devote myself with all my powers and energies to my Father above; so we, looking at the free, and loving, and eager sacrifice of our Lord, say in our hearts, Would God I could thus live in God and for God, and so become one with perfect purity and justice, with infinite love and power.

The Paschal Lamb then was in the first place the acknowledgment by the Israelites that they belonged to God. The lamb was offered to God, not as being itself anything worthy of God's acceptance, but merely as a way of saying to God that the family who offered it gave themselves up as entirely to Him. But by thus becoming a kind of substitute for the family, it saved the firstborn from death. God did not wish to smite Israel, but to save them. He did not wish to confound them with the Egyptians, and make an indiscriminate slaughter. But God did not simply omit the Israelite houses, and pick out the Egyptian ones throughout the land. He left it to the choice of the people whether they would accept His deliverance and belong to Him or not. He told them that every home would be safe, on the door-posts of which there was visible

the blood of the lamb. The blood of the lamb thus provided a refuge for the people, a shelter from death which otherwise would have fallen upon them. The angel of judgment was to recognise no distinction between Israelite and Egyptian save this of the sprinkled, stained door-posts. Death was to enter every house where the blood was not visible; mercy was to rest on every family that dwelt under this sign. God's judgment was out that night all over the land, and no difference of race was made anything of. They who had disregarded the use of the blood would have no time to object, We be Abraham's seed. God meant that they should all be rescued, but He knew that it was quite possible that some had become so entangled with Egypt that they would be unwilling to leave it, and He would not force any—we may say He *could* not force any—to yield themselves to Him. This rendering of ourselves to God must be a free act on our part; it must be the deliberate and true act of a soul that feels convinced of the poverty and wretchedness of all life that is not serving God. And God left it in the choice of each family—they might or might not use the blood, as they pleased. But wherever it was used, safety and deliverance were thereby secured. Wherever the lamb was slain in acknowledgment that the family belonged to God, God dealt with them as with His own. Wherever there was no such acknowledgment, they were dealt with as those who preferred to be God's enemies.

And now Christ our Passover is slain, and we are asked to determine the application of Christ's sacrifice, to say whether we will use it or no. We are not asked to add anything to the efficacy of that sacrifice, but only to avail ourselves of it. Passing through the

streets of the Egyptian cities on the night of the Passover, you could have told who trusted God and who did not. Wherever there was faith there was a man in the twilight with his bason of blood and bunch of hyssop, sprinkling his lintel and then going in and shutting his door, resolved that no solicitation should tempt him from behind the blood till the angel was by. He took God at His word; he believed God meant to deliver him, and he did what he was told was his part. The result was that he was rescued from Egyptian bondage. God now desires that we be separated from everything which prevents us from gladly serving Him, from every evil bias in us which prevents us from delighting in God, from all that makes us feel guilty and unhappy, from all sin that enchains us and makes our future hopeless and dark. God calls us to Himself, meaning that we shall one day get for ever past all that has made us unfaithful to Him and all that has made it impossible for us to find deep and lasting pleasure in serving Him To us He throws open a way out from all bondage, and from all that gives us the spirit of slaves; He gives us the opportunity of following Him into real and free life, into glad fellowship with Him and joyful partnership in His ever beneficent and progressive work. What response are we making? In the face of the varied difficulties and deluding appearances of this life, in the face of the complexity and inveterate hold of sin, can you believe that God seeks to deliver you and even now designs for you a life that is worthy of His greatness and love, a life which shall perfectly satisfy you and give play to all your worthy desires and energies?

Sacrifices were in old times accompanied by feasts

in which the reconciled God and His worshippers ate together. In the feast of Passover the lamb which had been used as a sacrifice was consumed as food to strengthen the Israelites for their exodus. This idea Paul here adapts to his present purpose. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," he says; "let us therefore keep the feast." The whole life of the Christian is a festal celebration; his strength is maintained by that which has given him peace with God. By Christ's death God reconciles us to Himself; out of Christ we continually receive what fits us to serve God as His free people. Every Christian should aim at making his life a celebration of the true deliverance Christ has accomplished for us. We should see that our life is a true exodus, and being so it will bear marks of triumph and of freedom. To feed upon Christ, joyfully to assimilate all that is in Him to our own character, it is this which makes life festal, which turns faintness into abounding strength, and brings zest and appetite into monotonous labour.

But Paul's purpose in introducing the idea of the Passover is rather to enforce his injunction to the Corinthians to purge their communion of all defilement. "Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness!" Leaven was judged unclean, because fermentation is one form of corruption. This impurity was not to be touched by the holy people during their festival week. This was secured at the first keeping of the Passover by the suddenness of the exodus when the people fled with their kneading boards on their shoulders and had no time to take leaven, and had therefore no choice but to keep God's command and eat unleavened bread. And so scrupulously did the people at all times

observe this that before the day of the feast they used to sweep their houses and search the dark corners with candles, lest a morsel of leaven should be found among them. Thus would Paul have all Christians be separate from the rotting, fermenting results of the old life. So suddenly would he have us issue from it and so clean would He have us leave it all behind us. A *little* leaven leaveneth the whole lump; therefore must we be careful, if we would keep this precept and be clean, to search into even unlikely corners in our hearts and lives, and as with the candle of the Lord make diligent search for the tainting remnant.

It is the purpose to keep the feast faithfully, and live as those who are delivered from bondage, which reveals in our consciousness how much we have to put away, and how much of the old life is following on into the new. Habits, feelings, likings and dislikings, all go with us. The unleavened bread of holiness and of a life bound to and ruled by the earnest and godly life of Christ, seems flat and insipid, and we crave something more stimulating to the appetite. The old intolerance of regular, intelligent, continuous prayer, the old willingness to find a rest in this world, must be purged out as leaven which will alter the whole character of our life. Are our holy days holidays, or do we endure holiness of thought and feeling mainly on the consideration that holiness is but for a season? Patiently and believingly resist the stirrings of the old nature. Measure all that rises in you and all that quickens your blood and stirs your appetite by the death and spirit of Christ. Sever yourself determinedly from all that alienates you from Him. The old life and the new should not run parallel with one another so that you can pass from the one to the other. They

are not side by side, but end to end; the one all preceding the other, the one ceasing and terminating where the other begins.

The old leaven is to be put away: "the leaven of malice and wickedness," the bad-heartedness that is not seen to be bad till brought into the light of Christ's spirit; the spiteful, vindictive, and selfish feelings that are almost expected in society, these are to be put away; and in their stead "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" is to be introduced. Above all things, Paul would say, let us be sincere. The word "sincere" sets before the mind the natural image from which the moral quality takes its name, the honey free from the smallest particle of wax, pure and pellucid. The word which Paul himself, using his own language, here sets down, conveys a similar idea. It is a word derived from the custom of judging the purity of liquids or the texture of cloths by holding them between the eye and the sun. What Paul desiderates in the Christian character is a quality which can stand this extreme test, and does not need to be seen only in an artificial light. He wants a pure transparent sincerity; he wants what is to its finest thread genuine; an acceptance of Christ which is real, and which is rich in eternal results.

Are we living a genuine and true life? Are we living up to what we know to be the truth about life? Christ has given us the true estimate of this world and all that is in it, He has measured for us God's requirements, He has shown us what is the truth about God's love;—are we living in this truth? Do we not find that in our best intentions there is some mixture of foreign elements, and in our most assured choice of Christ some remaining elements which will lead us

back from our choice? Even while we own Christ as our Saviour from sin, we are but half-inclined to go out from its bondage. We pray God for deliverance, and when He throws wide open before us the gate that leads away from temptation, we refuse to see it, or hesitate until again it is closed. We know how we may become holy, and yet will not use our knowledge.

Let us, whatever else, be genuine. Let us not trifle with the purpose and requirements of Christ. In our deepest and clearest consciousness we see that Christ does open the way to the true life of man; that it is our part to make room for this self-sacrificing life in our own day and in our own circumstances; that until we do so we can only by courtesy be called Christians. The convictions and beliefs which Christ inspires are convictions and beliefs about what we should be, and what Christ means all human life to be, and until these convictions and beliefs are embodied in our actual living selves, and in our conduct and life, we feel that we are not genuine. Time will bring us no relief from this humiliating position, unless time brings us at length to yield ourselves freely to Christ's Spirit, and unless, instead of looking at the kingdom He seeks to establish as a quite impossible Utopia, we set ourselves resolutely and wholly to aid in the annexing to His rule our own little world of business and of all the relations of life. To have convictions is well, but if these convictions are not embodied in our life, then we lose our life, and our house is built on sand.

ON GOING TO LAW.

"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the Church. I speak to your shame. Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."—1 Cor. vi. 1-11.

IX.

ON GOING TO LAW.

ST. PAUL here gives his judgment on the litigiousness of the Corinthians. The Greeks, in general, were fond of going to law. They were not only quarrelsome but they seemed to derive an excitement pleasant to their frivolous nature in the suspense and uncertainty of cases before the courts. The converts to Christianity seemed not to have discarded this taste, and as a habit of going to law not merely involved great loss of time, but was also dangerous to the feeling of brotherhood which should exist among Christians, St. Paul takes the opportunity to throw in some advice on the subject. He has been telling them they have nothing to do with judging the heathen; he now proceeds to remind them that they ought not to go to law before the heathen. He feared that an unseemly wrangling among Christians might convey to the heathen quite an erroneous impression of the nature of their religion. There was, to his mind, something incongruous, something monstrous, in brother going to law with brother. What was that brotherhood worth that could not bear a little wrong? How could he continue to speak of Christian love, if Christians were to bite and devour one another? How could he preach the superiority of Christianity to heathenism

if Christians had so little common sense, so little *esprit de corps*, so little mutual forbearance, that they must call in a heathen to settle their disputes for them? It seemed to Paul to be a losing of caste for Christians to proclaim their insufficiency to carry on their own affairs without the aid of heathen. It seemed to him a public profession that Christianity was not sufficient for the needs of its adherents.

The reasons which St. Paul adduces to give weight to his rebuke are important.

I. The saints are destined to judge the world, to judge angels; that is to say, to judge persons in separation from earthly interests, to judge unclothed detached spirits, to ascertain what is spiritually good and spiritually evil. Shall they not then be considered fit to judge little worldly matters, matters of £ *s. d.*, matters of property and of bargain? This statement that the saints shall judge the world is one of those broad widely-suggestive statements with which St. Paul from time to time surprises us, making them casually, as if he had many more equally astounding facts in his knowledge which he might also reveal if he had leisure. It is difficult to grasp the statements which he makes in this style; it is also difficult to link a truth so revealed to the truths amid which we are now living; it is difficult even to ascertain with precision the bearing and significance of it.

It seems plain, however, that whatever else may be implied in this statement, and in whatever way it is to be fulfilled, St. Paul meant that ultimately, in that final state of things towards which all present things are growing and travelling, the men who are holy shall be at the head of affairs, acknowledged as the fittest to discern between right and wrong; and also that the

germ and first principles of this final state of things are already implanted in the world by the Christian religion—two very important truths, certainly, to those who believe them. The precise form of the final judgment and future government of the world we cannot predict; but from this statement a bright ray of light shoots into the darkness, and shows us that the saints, *i.e.*, the servants of Christ, are to have the responsibility of pronouncing judgment on character, and of allotting destiny, reward or punishment. We shrink from such a thought; not, indeed, that we are slow to pronounce judgment upon our fellow-men, but to do so officially, and in connection with definite results, seems a responsibility too heavy for merely human judges to sustain. But why men should not judge men hereafter as they do judge them now, we do not see. If we, in this present world, submit ourselves to those who have knowledge of law and ordinary justice, we may well be content to be judged in the world to come by those whose holiness has been matured by personal strife against evil, by sustained efforts to cleanse their souls from bias, from envy, from haste, from harshness, from all that hinders them from seeing and loving the truth. Holiness, or likeness to God, assimilation to His mind, formed by the constant desire to judge of things in this world as He judges, and to love truly all that He loves, this quality is surely worthy to be at the head. In that future kingdom of God in which all things are to have their proper place, and are to be ranked according to their real worth, holiness must come to the supremacy.

But equally worthy of remark is St. Paul's *inference* from the fact that holiness shall eventually be supreme. His inference is that it ought *now* to be regarded as

competent to settle the petty disputes which arise among us. "If we are to judge angels, much more the things that pertain to this life." We can only arrive at any dignity by perseveringly seeking it. If the future kingdom of God is to be a perfect kingdom, it can only be as its subjects carry into it characters which have been strongly tending towards perfection It is not the future that is to make us, but we who are to make the future. The kingdom of God is within us; if not there, in our own dispositions and likings, it is nowhere. Heaven will be what its inhabitants make it. Earth is not heaven only because men decline to make it so. We do not know the forms which society will assume in the world to come, when men will be grouped, not by families and blood-relationships, and the necessary requirements of physical life, but according to their character and moral value, their spiritual affinities and capacities for usefulness. But though we cannot say exactly how men will be grouped, nor how they will find expression for all that intense emotion and eager activity which in this life creates adventure, war, politics, speculation, inventions of all kinds, we do know that wherever there are men there must be society; there must be men not isolated and solitary, but working together and depending one on the other; and that there will therefore be difficult complications of interest and obscure relations of man to man very similar to those which arise in this world; but that those difficulties will be removed without passion and wrangling and the interference of force. A heaven and an earth there will be; but "a new heaven and a new earth." The outer framework will be very much the same, but the inner spirit and life very different. But it is not

the altered place or time that is to produce in us this change of spirit; we are to find it there only if we carry it with us. St. Paul takes for granted that the principles which are to be perfectly and exclusively manifested in the world to come, are now cherished by Christians. And as there will be no differences in heaven which cannot be adjusted without appeal to an authority which can silence and reconcile the disputants, so there ought to be, among the heirs of heaven, no going to law now.

St. Paul, therefore, while he contrasts the subjects in which a lawyer-like mind will find employment in this world and the next, reminds us that those who are here trained to understand character, and to discern where right and justice lie, will be in no want of employment in the world to come. The matters which come before our courts, or which are referred privately to lawyers, may often be in themselves very paltry. A vast proportion of legal business is created by changes from which the future life is exempt, changes consequent on death, on marriage, on pecuniary disasters. But underneath such suits as these the keenest of human feelings are at work, and it is often in the power of a lawyer to give a man advice which will save his conscience from a life-long stain, or which will bring comfort into a family instead of heart-burning, and plenty in place of penury. The physician keeps us in life; the minister of Christ tells us on what principles we ought to live; but the lawyer takes our hand at every great practical step in life, and it is his function (and surely there is none higher) to insist on a conscientious use of money, to point out the just claims which others have upon us, to show us the right and the wrong in all our ordinary affairs, and thus to bring justice

and mercy down from heaven and make them familiar to the market-place. And therefore many of the finest characters and best intellects have devoted themselves, and always will devote themselves, to this profession. It may attract many from less lofty motives; but it always will attract those who are concerned to save men from practical folly, and who wish to see the highest principles brought into direct contact with human affairs. If the legal mind degenerates into a mere memory for technicalities and acuteness in applying forms, nothing can be more contemptible or dangerous to the character; but if it takes to do with real things, and not with forms only, and tries to see what equity requires, and not merely what the letter of the law enjoins, and seeks to forward the well-being of men, then surely there is no profession in which there is such abundant opportunity of earning the beatitude which says, "Blessed are the peacemakers," none in which the senses can better be exercised to discern between good and evil, none in which men may better be prepared for the higher requirements of a heavenly society in which some are made rulers over ten cities.

II. The second confirmation of his rebuke St. Paul brings forward in the fifth verse: "Is there not a wise man among yourselves?" "A wise man" was the technical term for a judge in the Hebrew courts.

To understand Paul's position we must bear in mind that among the Jews there was no distinction between Church and State. The courts appointed for the determination of the minor causes in each locality were composed of the same persons who constituted the eldership of the synagogue. In the synagogue and by the eldership offenders were both tried and punished.

The rabbis said, "He who brings lawsuits of Israel before a heathen tribunal profanes the Name, and does homage to idolatry; for when *our enemies* are *judges* (Deut. xxxii. 31) it is a testimony to the superiority of their religion." This idea passed over from Judaism to Christianity; and Paul considers it a scandal that "brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers." And even a century after Paul's time the rule of the Christian Church was "Let not those who have disputes go to law before the civil powers, but let them by all means be reconciled by the elders of the Church, and let them readily yield to their decision." And as late as our own day we find an Arab sheikh complaining that Christian Copts come to him, a Mohammedan, to settle their disputes and "won't go and be settled by the priest out of the Gospels."

Did Paul then mean that such legal cases as are now tried in our civil courts should be settled by non-professional men? Did he mean that ecclesiastical courts should take out of the hands of the civil magistrate all pleas regarding property, all disputes about commercial transactions? Did he foresee none of the great evils that have arisen wherever Church or State has not respected the province of the other, and was he prepared to put the power of the sword into the hand of ecclesiastics? We think no one can read either his life or his writings without seeing that this was not his meaning. He taught men to submit themselves to the powers that then were—*i.e.*, to the heathen magistrates of Rome—and he himself appealed to Cæsar. He had no notion of subverting the ordinary legal procedure and civil courts, but he would fain have deprived them of much of their practice. He thought it might be

expected that Christians would never be so determinedly rancorous or so blindly covetous but that their disputes might be settled by private and friendly advice. He gives no orders about constituting new courts and appointing new statutes and forms of procedure; he has no idea of transferring into the Church all the paraphernalia of civil courts: but he maintains that if a Christian community be in a healthy state, few quarrels will be referred for settlement to a court of law. Courts of law are necessary evils, which will be less and less patronized in proportion as Christian feeling and principle prevail.

This rebuke is applicable even to a community like our own, in which the courts of law are not heathen, but Christian; and the principle on which the rebuke is based is one that has gradually worked its way into the heart of the community. It is felt, felt now even by nations as well as by individuals, that if a dispute can be settled by arbitration, this is not only cheaper, quicker, and equally satisfactory, but that it is a more generous and Christian way of getting justice done. Those who hold office in the Church may not always happen to be suitable arbitrators; they may not have the technical and special knowledge requisite: but Paul's counsel is acted on if disputes among Christians be somehow adjusted in a friendly way, and without the interference of an external authority. Christian people may need legal advice; they may not know what the right and wrong of a complicated case are; they may be truly at a loss to understand how much is justly theirs and how much their neighbour's; they may often need professional aid to shed light on a transaction: but when two Christians go to law in a spirit of rancour, resolved to make good their own just

claims, and to enforce by the authority of law what they cannot compass by right feeling, this only proves that their worldliness is stronger than their Christianity. St. Paul thinks it a scandal and a degradation when Christians need to appeal to law against one another. It is a confession that Christian principle is in their case insufficient by itself to carry them through the practical difficulties of life.

But some one will say to this, as to every unworldly, truly Christian, and therefore novel and difficult counsel, "It savours of theory and of romance; a man cannot act it out unless he is prepared to be duped, and cheated, and imposed upon. It is a theory that if carried out must end in beggary." Just as if the world could be regenerated by anything that is not apparently romantic! If a greater good is to be reached, it must be by some way that men have not tried before. The kingdoms of this world will not become the kingdom of Christ by the admission into our conduct of only that which men have tried and found to be practicable, and void of all risk, and requiring no devotion or sacrifice. If then, any one says, "But if there is to be no going to law, if we are not to force a man to give us our own, we must continually be losers," the reply of a well-known Kincardineshire lawyer might suffice, "Don't go to law if yielding does not cost you more than forty shillings in the pound." And from a different point of view St. Paul replies, "Well, and what though you be losers? The kingdom you belong to is not meat and drink, but righteousness." If a man says, "We must have some redress, some authority to extort the dues that are not freely given; we must strike when we are struck; when a man takes our coat, we must summon him, or he will take our cloak next," St. Paul replies,

"Well, if this *be* the alternative, if you must either push your own claims and insist upon your rights, or suffer by assuming the meekness and gentleness of your Master, why do you not rather take wrong? why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? It may be quite true that if you turn the other cheek, it also will be smitten. It may be very likely that a greedy competitor will be so little abashed by your meekness, and so little struck by your magnanimity in giving way to some of his demands, that he will even be encouraged to greater extortions. It is quite probable that if you act as your Master did, you will be as ill off in this world as He was. But is that any reason why you should at once call Him your Master and refuse to obey His precepts and follow His example?" One thing is certain: that so long as men honestly accepted Christ's words in their plain meaning, and followed Him in His own way, making light of worldly loss, Christianity was believed in and rapidly extended. It was seen to be a new moral power among men, and was welcomed as such, until a large part of the world received it; but its victory was its defeat. Once it became the fashion, once it became popular, the heart of it was eaten out. As soon as it became a religion without hardship, it became a religion without vitality.

St. Paul then shows no hesitation about pushing his doctrine to its consequences. He sees that the real cure of wrangling, and of fraud, and of war is not litigation, nor any outward restraint that can be laid on the wrong-doer, but meekness, and unselfishness, and unworldliness on the part of those who suffer wrong. The world has laughed at this theory of social regeneration all along; a few men in each generation have believed in it, and have been ridiculed for their

belief. At the same time, the world itself is aware, or should be aware, that its own remedies have utterly failed. Has war taught nations moderation in their ambition? Has it saved the world from the calamities which it is said would ensue were any one nation to prefer submitting to injustice rather than going to war? Have the outward restraints of law made men more just or less avaricious? There has been time to test the power of law to repress crime, and to compel men to honesty and justice. Can any one say it has been so successful that it must be looked to as the great means of regenerating society, of bringing society into that healthy and ideal state which statesmen work for, and for which the people inarticulately sigh? Does not St. James come nearer the mark when he says, "Whence come wars and fightings? Come they not hence, even of the lusts that war in your members?" —*i.e.*, from the restless ambitions, and appetites, and longings of men who seek their all in this world? And if that is their source, it is to that we must apply the remedy. Law is necessary for restraining the expressions of a vicious nature, but law is insufficient to remove the possibility of these expressions by healing the nature. This can only be done by the diffusion of unworldliness and unselfishness. And it is Christians who are responsible for diffusing this unworldly spirit, and who must diffuse it, not by talk and advice, but by practice and example, by themselves showing what unselfishness is, rebuking covetousness by yielding to its demands, shaming all wrong-doing by refusing to retaliate while they expose its guilt.

While therefore it is a mistake to suppose that all the laws which are to rule in the perfected kingdom of God can find immediate and unmodified expression in

this present world, it is our part to find for them an introduction into the world in every case in which it is possible to apply them. Those laws which are to be our sole rule when we are perfect cannot always be immediately applied now. For example, we all believe that ultimately love will be the only motive, that all service of God and of one another will eventually spring solely from our desire to serve because we love. And because this is so, some persons have thought that love should be the only motive now, and that obedience which is procured by fear is useless; that preachers ought to appeal only to the highest parts of man's nature, and not at all to those which are lower; and that parents should never threaten punishment nor enforce obedience. But the testimony of one of the most genial and successful of preachers is that "of all the persons to whom his ministry had been efficacious *only one* had received the first effectual impressions from the gentle and attractive aspects of religion, all the rest from the awful and alarming ones—the appeals to fear." Take, again, the testimony of one of the wisest and most successful of our schoolmasters. "I can't rule my boys," he says, "by the law of love. If they were angels or professors, I might; but as they are only boys, I find it necessary to make them fear me first, and then take my chance of their love afterwards. By this plan I find that I generally get both; by reversing the process I should in most cases get neither." And God, though slow to anger and not easily provoked, scourgeth every son whom He receiveth, not dealing with us now as He will deal with us when perfect love has cast out its preparative fear. So, in regard to the matter before us, there must be an aiming and striving towards the perfect state in

which there shall be no going to law, no settling of matters by appeal to anything outside the heart of the persons interested But while we aim at this, and seek to give it prevalence, we shall also be occasionally forced back upon the severer and more external means of self-defence. The members of Christ's Church are those on whom the burden falls of giving prevalence to these Christian principles. It is incumbent upon them to show, even at cost to themselves, that there are higher, better, and more enduring principles than law, and the customs of trade, and the ways of the world. And however difficult it may be *theoretically* to hold the balance between justice and mercy, between worldly sharpness and Christian meekness, we all know that there are some who practically exhibit a large measure of this Christian temper, who prefer to take wrong and to suffer quietly rather than to expose the wickedness of others, or to resent their unjust claims, or to complain of their unfair usage. And whatever the most worldly of us may think of such conduct, however we may smile at it as weak, there is no one of us but also pays his tribute of respect to those who suffer wrong, loss, detraction, with a meek and cheerful patience; and whatever be the lot of such sufferers in a world where men are too busy in pushing their worldly prospects to understand those who are not of this world, we have no doubt in what esteem they will be held and what reward they will receive in a world where the Lamb is on the throne, and meek self-sacrifice is honestly worshipped as the highest quality whether in God or in man.

Paul knows that the Christian conscience is with him when he declares that men should rather suffer wrong than bring reproach on the Christian name:

"Know ye not that wrong-doers shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God." And yet how little do men seem to take to heart the great fact that they are travelling forward to a state in which nothing uncongenial to the Spirit of Christ can possibly find place. Do they think of the future at all? Do they believe that a state of things ruled by the Spirit of Christ is to follow this? And what preparation do they make? Is it not the height of folly to suppose that the selfishness and greed, the indolence and frivolity, the dreamy unreality and worldliness, which we suffer to grow upon us here, will give us entrance into the kingdom of God? The seaman who means to winter in the Arctic circle might as reasonably go with a single month's provisions and clothes suited to the tropics. There is a reason and a law in things; and if we are not assimilated to the Spirit of Christ now, we can have no part in His kingdom. If now our interest, and pursuits, and pleasures are all found in what gratifies selfishness and worldliness, it is impossible we can find a place in that kingdom which is all unselfishness and unworldliness. "Be not deceived." The spiritual world is a reality, and the godliness and Christlikeness that compose it must also be realities. Put away from you the fatuous idea that things will somehow come all right, and that your character will adapt itself to changed surroundings. It is not so; nothing that defiles can find entrance into the kingdom of God, but only those who are "sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

FORNICATION.

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."—I Cor. vi. 12-20.

X.

FORNICATION.

IN remonstrating with the Corinthians for their litigiousness, Paul was forcibly reminded how imperfectly his converts understood the moral requirements of the kingdom of God. Apparently, too, he had reason to believe that they were not only content to remain on a low moral plane, but actually quoted some of his own favourite sayings in defence of immoral practices. After warning them therefore that only those who were sanctified could belong to the kingdom of God and specifying certain common kinds of wrong-doing which must for ever be excluded from that kingdom, he goes on to explain how they had misapprehended him if they thought that any principle of his could give colour to immorality. The Corinthians had apparently learned to argue that if, as Paul had so often and emphatically told them, all things were lawful to them, then this commonest of Greek indulgences was lawful; if abstaining from the meat which had been killed in a heathen temple was a matter of moral indifference which Christians might or might not practise, as they pleased, then this other common accompaniment of idolatry was also a matter of indifference and not in itself wrong.

To understand this Corinthian obliquity of moral

vision it must be borne in mind that licentious rites were a common accompaniment of pagan worship, and especially in Corinth idolatry might have been briefly described as the performance of Balaam's instructions to the Israelites: the eating of things sacrificed to idols and the committing of fornication. The temples were often scenes of revelry and debauchery such as happily have become incredible to a modern mind. But not at once could men emerging from a religion so slenderly connected with morality apprehend what Christianity required of them. When they abandoned the temple-worship, were they also to abstain from eating the flesh offered for sale in the open market, and which had first been sacrificed to an idol? Might they not by partaking of such flesh become partakers in the sin of idolatry? To this Paul replied, Do not too scrupulously inquire into the previous history of your dinner; the meat has no moral taint; all things are lawful for you. This was reasonable; but then how about the other accompaniment of idolatry? Was it also a thing of indifference? Can we apply the same reasoning to it? It was this insinuation which called forth the emphatic condemnation which Paul utters in this paragraph.

The great principle of Christian liberty, "All things are lawful for me," Paul now sees he must guard against abuse by adding, "But all things are not expedient." The law and its modification are fully explained in a subsequent passage of the Epistle (viii.; x. 23, etc.). Here it may be enough to say that Paul seeks to impress on his readers that the question of duty is not answered by simply ascertaining what is lawful; we must also ask whether the practice or act contemplated is expedient. Though i may be

impossible to prove that this or that practice is wrong in every case, we have still to ask, Does it advance what is good in us; is its bearing on society good or evil; will it in present circumstances and in the instance we contemplate give rise to misunderstandings and evil thoughts? The Christian is a law to himself; he has an internal guide that sets him above external rules. Very true; but that guide leads all those who possess it to a higher life than the law leads to, and proves its presence by teaching a man to consider, not how much indulgence he may enjoy without transgressing the letter of the law, but how he can most advantageously use his time and best forward what is highest in himself and in others.

Again, "all things are lawful for me;" all things are in my power. Yes, but for that very reason "I will not be brought under the power of any." "The reasonable use of my liberty cannot go the length of involving my own loss of it."[1] I am free from the law; I will not on that account become the slave of indulgence. As Carlyle puts it, "enjoying things which are pleasant—that is not the evil; it is the reducing of our moral self to slavery by them that is. Let a man assert withal that he is king over his habitudes; that he could and would shake them off on cause shown: this is an excellent law." There are several practices and habits which no one would call immoral or sinful, but which enslave a man quite as much as worse habits. He is no longer a free man; he is uneasy and restless, and cannot settle to his work until he obeys the craving he has created. And it is the very lawfulness of these indulgences which has ensnared him. Had they been sinful, the Christian man would not have indulged in

[1] Godet.

them; but being in his power, they have now assumed power over him. They have power to compel him to waste his time, his money, sometimes even his health. He alone attains the true dignity and freedom of the Christian man who can say, with Paul, "I know both how to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need;" "All things are in my power, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

Paul then proceeds more explicitly to apply these principles to the matter in hand. The Corinthians argued that if meats were morally indifferent, a man being morally neither the better nor the worse for eating food which had been offered in an idol's temple, so also a man was neither better nor worse for fornication. To expose the error of this reasoning Paul draws a remarkable distinction between the digestive, nutritive organs of the body and the body as a whole. Paul believed that the body was an essential part of human nature, and that in the future life the natural body would give place to the spiritual body. He believed also that the spiritual body was connected with, and had its birthplace in, the natural body, so that the body we now wear is to be represented by that finer and more spiritual organism we are hereafter to be clothed in. The connection of that future body with the physical world and its dependence on material things we cannot understand; but in some way inconceivable by us it is to carry on the identity of our present body, and thereby it reflects a sacredness and significance on this body. The body of the full-grown man or of the white-bearded patriarch is very different from that of the babe in its mother's arms, but there is a continuity that links them together and gives them identity. So the future body may be very

different from and yet the same as the present. At the same time, the organs which merely serve for the maintenance of our present natural body will be unnecessary and out of place in the future body, which is spiritual in its origin and in its maintenance. Paul therefore distinguishes between the organs of nutrition and that body which is part of our permanent individuality, and which by some unimaginable process is to flower into an everlasting body. The digestive organs of the body have their use and their destiny, and the body as a whole has its use and destiny. These two differ from one another; and if you are to argue from the one to the other, you must keep in view this distinction. "Meats for the belly and the belly for meats; and God shall destroy both it and them: but the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body, and God shall raise up the one as He has raised up the other." The organs of nutrition have a present use; they are made for meats, and have a natural correspondence with meats. Any meat which the digestive organs approve is allowable. The conscience has to do with meat only through these organs. It must listen to their representations; and if they approve of certain qualities and quantities of food, the conscience confirms this decision: approves when the man uses the food best for these organs; disapproves when he uses consciously and self-indulgently what is bad for them. "Meats for the belly and the belly for meats"—they claim each other as their mutual, God-appointed counterparts. By eating you are not perverting your bodily organs to a use not intended for them; you are putting them to the use God meant them to serve.

Besides, these organs form no part of the future spiritual body. They pass away with the meats for

which they were made. God shall destroy both the meats that are requisite for life in this world, and the organs needful for deriving sustenance from them. They serve a temporary purpose, like the houses we live in and the clothes we wear; and as we are not morally better because we live in a stone house, and not in a brick one, or because we wear woollens, and not cotton—so long as we do what is best to keep us in life—so neither is there any moral difference in meats—a remarkable conclusion for a Jew to come to, whose religion had taught him to hold so many forms of food in abhorrence.

But the body as a whole—for what is it made? These organs of nutrition fulfil their function when they lead you to eat such meat as sustains you in life; when does the body fulfil its function? What is its object and end? For what purpose have we a body? Paul is never afraid to suggest the largest questions, neither is he afraid to give his answer. "The body," he says, "is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." Here also there is a mutual correspondence and fitness.

"The body is for the Lord." Paul was addressing Christians, and this no Christian would be disposed to deny. Every Christian is conscious that the body would not fulfil its end and purpose unless it were consecrated to the Lord and informed by His Spirit. The organism by which we come into contact with the world outside ourselves is not the unwieldy, hindering, irredeemable partner of the spirit, but is designed to be the vehicle of spiritual faculties and the efficient agent of our Lord's purposes. It must not be looked upon with resentment, pity, or contempt, but rather as essential to our human nature and to the fulfilment

of the Lord's design as the Saviour of the world and the Head of humanity. It was through the body of the Lord that the great facts of our redemption were accomplished. It was the instrument of the incarnation and of the manifestation of God among men, of the death and the resurrection by which we are saved. And as in His own body Christ was incarnate among men, so now it is by means of the bodily existence and energies of His people on earth that He extends His influence.

The body then is for the Lord. He finds in it His needed instrument; without it He cannot accomplish His will. And the Lord is for the body. Without Him the body cannot develop into all it is intended to be. It has a great future as well as the soul. Our adoption as God's children is, in Paul's view, incomplete until the body also is redeemed and has fought its way through sickness, base uses, death, and dissolution into likeness to the glorified body of Christ. This body which we now identify with ourselves, and apart from which it is difficult to conceive of ourselves, is not the mere temporary lodging of the soul, which in a few years must be abandoned; but it is destined to preserve its identity through all coming changes, so that it will be recognisable still as our body. But this cannot be believed, far less accomplished, save by faith in the fact that God has raised up the Lord Jesus and will with Him raise us also. Otherwise the future of the body seems brief and calamitous. Death seems plainly to say, There is an end of all that is physical. Yes, replies the resurrection of the Lord, in death there is an end of this natural body; but death disengages the spiritual body from the natural, and clothes the spirit in a more fitting garb. Understand this we

cannot, any more than we understand why a large mass draws to itself smaller masses; but believe it we can in presence of Christ's resurrection.

The Lord then is for the body, because in the Lord the body has a future opened to it and present connections and uses which prepare it for that future. It is the Spirit of Christ who is, within us, the earnest of that future, and who forms us for it, inclining us while in the body and by means of it to sow to the Spirit and thus to reap life everlasting. Without Christ we cannot have this Spirit, nor the spiritual body He forms. The only future of the body we dare to look at without a shudder is the future it has in the Lord. God has sent Christ to secure for the body redemption from the fate which naturally awaits it, and apart from Christ it has no outlook but the worst. The Lord is for the body, and as well might we try to sustain the body now without food as to have any endurable future for it without the Lord.

But if the body is thus closely united to Christ in its present use and in its destiny, if its proper function and fit development can only be realized by a true fellowship with Christ, then the inference is self-evident that it must be carefully guarded from such uses and impurities as involve rupture with Christ. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid." The Christian is one spirit with Christ. There is a real community of spiritual life between them. It is the spirit which possessed Christ which now possesses the Christian. He has the same aims, the same motives, the same view of life, the same hope, as his Lord. It is in Christ he seeks to live, and he has no

stronger desire than to be used for His purposes. That Christ would use him as He used the members of His own body while on earth, that there might be the same direct influence and moving power of the Lord's Spirit, the same ready and instinctive response to the Lord's will, the same solidarity between himself and the Lord as between Christ's body and Christ's Spirit—this is the Christian's desire. To have his body a member of Christ—this is his happiness. To be one in will with Him who has brought by His own goodness the light of heaven into the darkness of earth, to learn to know Him and to love Him by serving Him and by measuring His love with all the needs of earth —this is his life. To be so united to Christ in all that is deepest in his nature that he knows he can never be separated from Him, but must go forward to the happy destiny which his Lord already enjoys—this is the Christian's joy; and it is made possible to every man.

Possible to every man is this personal union to Christ, but to be united thus in one Spirit to Christ and at the same time to be united to impurity is for ever impossible. To be one with Christ in spirit and at the same time to be one in body with what is spiritually defiled is impossible, and the very idea is monstrous. Devotedness to Christ is possible, but it is incompatible with any act which means that we become one in body with what is morally polluted. If the Christian is as truly a member of Christ's body as were the hands and eyes of the body He wore on earth, then the mind shrinks, as from blasphemy, from following out the thought of Paul. And if any frivolous Corinthian still objected that such acts went no deeper than the eating of food ceremonially unclean, that

they belonged to the body that was to be destroyed, Paul says, It is not so; these acts are full of the deepest moral significance: they were intended by God to be *the expression of inward union*, and they have that significance whether you shut your eyes to it or not.

And this is what Paul means when he goes on to say, "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." He does not mean that this is the only sin committed by the body, for of many other sins the body is the agent, as in murder, lying, blasphemy, robbery, and thieving. Neither does he mean that this is the only sin to which bodily appetite instigates, for gluttony and drunkenness equally take their rise in bodily appetite. But he means that this is the only sin in which the present connection of the body with Christ and its future destiny in Him are directly sinned against. This is the only sin, he means, which by its very nature alienates the body from Christ, its proper Partner. Other sins indirectly involve separation from Christ; this explicitly and directly transfers allegiance, and sunders our union with Him. By this sin a man detaches himself from Christ; he professes to be united to what is incompatible with Christ.

These weighty reasonings and warm admonitions, into which Paul throws his whole energy, are concluded by the statement of a twofold truth which is of much wider application than to the matter in hand: "Ye are bought with a price to be the temple of the Holy Ghost." We are bought with a price, and are no longer our own. The realities underlying these words are gladly owned in every Christian consciousness. God has caused us to recognise how truly we are His by

showing us that He has grudged nothing which can restore us fully to Him. He has bought us, not with any of those prices the wealthy can pay without sacrifice and without profound interest and feeling, but with that price which is coined and issued by love, which carries in it the token and pledge of love, and which therefore wins us wholly. In our relations with God we have never to do with any merely formal transaction performed for the sake of keeping up appearances, saving the proprieties or satisfying the letter of law, but always with what is necessary in the nature of things, with what is real, with the very God of truth, the centre and source of all reality. God has made us His own, has won our hearts and wills to Himself, by manifesting His love in ways that touch and move us, and for purposes absolutely needful. God means that our attachment to Him should be real and permanent, and He has based it on the most reasonable grounds. He means that we should be His, not only because we are His creatures or because He has an indefeasible right to our service as the source of our life; but He means that our hearts should be His, and that we should be drawn to live and labour for His ends, convinced in our reason that this is our happiness and attracted by His love to serve Him. He means this; and accordingly He has bought us, has given us reason to become His, has made such advances as ought to win us has not grudged to show His earnest desire for our love by Himself making sacrifices and declaring that He loves us. It is a thought the humble heart can scarcely endure that it is loved by God, that it has been counted so precious in God's sight that Divine love and sacrifice should have been spent on its restoration.

It is a thought that overwhelms the believing heart, but, believed in, it wins the soul eternally to God.

We are not our own; we belong to Him who has loved us most; and His love will be satisfied when we suffer Him to dwell in us, so that we shall be His temples, and shall glorify Him in body and in spirit. God claims our body as well as our spirit; He has a purpose for our body as well as for our spirit. Our body is to glorify Him in the future and now: in the future, by exhibiting how the Divine wisdom has triumphed over all that threatens the body, and has used all the present bodily experiences for preparing a permanent spiritual embodiment of all human faculties and joys; and now, by putting itself at the disposal of God for the accomplishment of His will. We glorify God by allowing Him to fulfil His purpose of love in creating us. What that purpose is we cannot wholly know; but trusting ourselves to His love, we can, by obeying Him, have it more and more accomplished in us. And it is the consciousness that we are God's temples which constantly incites us to live worthily of Him. To say that we are temples of God is not to use a figure of speech. It is the temple of stone that is the figure; the true dwelling-place of God is man. In nothing can God reveal Himself as He can in man. Through nothing else can He express so much of what is truly Divine. It is not a building of stone which forms a fit temple for God; it is not even the heaven of heavens. In material nature only a small part of God can be seen and known. It is in man, able to choose what is morally good, able to resist temptation, to make sacrifices for worthy ends, to determine his own character; it is in man, whose own will is his law, and who is not the mere mechanical agent of

another's will, that God finds a worthy temple for Himself. Through you God can express and reveal what is best in Himself. Your love is sustained by His, and reveals His. Your approval of what is pure and hatred of impurity has its source in His holiness, and by transforming you into His own image He discloses Himself as truly dwelling and living within you. Where is God to be found and to be known if not in men? Where can His presence and Divine goodness and reality be more distinctly manifest than in Christ and those who are in any degree like Him? It is in men that the unseen Divine Spirit manifests His nature and His work. But if so, what a profanation is it when we take this body, which is built to be His temple, and put it to uses which it were blasphemous to associate with God! Let us rather find our joy in realizing the ideal set before us by Paul, in keeping ourselves pure as God's temples and in glorifying Him in our body and in our spirit.

MARRIAGE.

"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let every man abide

in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God. Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God."—1 Cor. vii. 1-40.

XI.

MARRIAGE.

THERE are two preliminary considerations which throw some light on this much-contested passage. First, Paul had to speak about marriage as he found it, as it existed among those to whom he wished to be of service. Hence he makes no allusion to that which among ourselves is the main argument for, or at least the one only justifying motive to, marriage, viz., love. Marriage is treated here from a lower point of view than it would have been had this letter been originally written for Englishmen. The Church to which it was addressed was composite. Jews, Greeks, and Romans, in what proportions it is not easy to say, brought their peculiar and national usages into it. In the marriages of the Jews and Greeks, love had, as a rule, little to do. The marriage was arranged by the parents of the contracting parties.

> "Faces strange and tongues unknown
> Make us by a bid their own,"

is the remonstrance of the Greek maiden against the unnatural custom which prevailed of allowing no intimacy, and scarcely any real acquaintance, prior to marriage. The lack of warmth and personal interest which characterizes the Greek plays arises mainly from the circumstance that among the Greeks there was

absolutely no such thing as that love prior to marriage on which even our best works of fiction uniformly depend for their interest. Among the Romans there was none of this Eastern seclusion of women, and but for other causes marriage among this section of the Corinthian population might have served as an example to the rest.

Secondly, it is to be considered that not only had Paul to speak of marriage as he found it, but also that he was here only giving answers to some special questions, and not discussing the whole subject in all its bearings. There might be other points which to his mind seemed equally important; but his advice not having been asked about these, he passes them by. He introduces the subject in a manner fitted to remind us that he has no intention of propounding his views on marriage in a complete and systematic form: "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me." There had arisen in the Corinthian Church certain scruples about marriage; and as the Church was composed of persons who would naturally take very different views on the subject, these scruples might not be easily removed. Among the Jews it was believed that marriage was a duty, "so much so that he who at the age of twenty had not married was considered to have sinned." Among the Gentiles the tendency to celibacy was so strong that it was considered necessary to counteract it by legal enactment. In a community previously disposed to take such opposite views of marriage difficulties were sure to arise. Those who were predisposed to disparage the married state would throw contempt upon it as a mere concession to the flesh; they apparently even urged that, Christians being new creatures, their whole previous relation-

ships were dissolved. To Paul therefore appeal is made.

The questions referred to Paul resolve themselves into two: whether the unmarried are to marry, and whether the married are to continue to live together.

In reply to the former question, whether the unmarried are to marry, he first states the duty of unmarried persons themselves (in vers. 2, 7—9); and afterwards (in vers. 25—39) he explains the duty of parents to their unmarried daughters.

I. First then we have Paul's counsel to the unmarried. This is summed up in the words, "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I;" that is to say, if they remain unmarried, Paul being probably the only unmarried Apostle. But if any man's temperament be such that he cannot settle undistractedly to his work without marrying; if he is restless and ill at ease, and full of natural cravings which make him think much of marriage, and make him feel sure he would be less distracted in married life—then, says Paul, let such an one by all means marry. But do not misunderstand me, he says; this is permission I am giving you, not commandment. I do not say you *must* or ought to marry; I say you *may*, and in certain circumstances *ought*. Those among you who say a man sins if he do not marry, talk nonsense. Those among you who feel a quiet superiority because you are married, and think of unmarried people as undergraduates who have not attained a degree equal to yours, are much mistaken if you suppose that I am of your mind. When I say, "Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband," I do not mean that every man who wishes to come as near perfection as

possible must go and marry, but what I speak I speak by way of permission; I permit every man to marry who deliberately believes he will be the better of marrying. So far from thinking that every man ought to marry, or that married men have somehow the advantage over single men, I think the very opposite, and would that *all* men were even as I myself, only I know that to many men it is not so easy as it is to me to live unmarried; and therefore I do not advise them to a single life.

But this advice of Paul's proceeds, not from any ascetic tendency, but from the practical bias of his mind. He had no idea that marriage was a morally inferior condition; on the contrary, he saw in it the most perfect symbol of the union of Christ and the Church. But he thought that unmarried men were likely to be most available for the work of Christ; and therefore he could not but wish it possible, though he knew it was not possible, that all unmarried men should remain unmarried.

His reason for thinking that unmarried men would be more efficient in the service of Christ is given in the thirty-second and thirty-third verses: "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife," an opinion quite similar to that which Lord Bacon pronounced when he said, "Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men, who both in affection and means have married and endowed the public." Given two men with equal desire to serve Christ, but the one married and the other unmarried, it is obvious

that the unmarried man has more means and opportunities of service than he who has a large family to support. No doubt a good wife may stimulate a man to liberality, and may greatly increase his tenderness towards deserving objects of charity; but the fact remains that he who has seven or ten mouths to fill cannot have so much to give away as if he had but himself to support. Then, again, however alike in sentiment husband and wife may be, there are sacrifices which a married man may not make. With the unmarried man there need be no other consideration than this: How can I best serve Christ? With the married man there must always be other considerations. He cannot ignore or forswear the ties with which he has bound himself; he cannot act as if he had only himself to consider. The unmarried man has life and the world before him, and may choose the most ideal and perfect style of life he pleases. He may seek to realize, as many in recent times have realized, the exact apostolic idea of how it is best to spend a human life. He may choose to devote himself to the elevation of some one class of the community, or he is free to go to the ends of the earth to preach the Gospel. He has no one thing to consider but how he may please the Lord. But the married man has limited his range of choice, and has cut himself off from some at least of the most influential ways of doing good in the world. It is therefore to the unmarried that the State looks for the manning of the army and navy; it is to the unmarried that society looks for the nursing of the sick and for the filling of posts of danger; and it is on the unmarried that the Church depends for a large part of her work, from teaching in Sunday-schools to occupying unhealthy and precarious outposts in the mission field.

But while Paul makes no scruple of saying that for many purposes the unmarried man is the more available, he says also, Beware how *you* individually think yourself a hero, and able to forego marriage. Beware lest, by choosing a part which you are not fit for, you give Satan an advantage over you, and expose yourself to constant temptation, and pass through life distracted by needless deprivation. "Far be it from me," says Paul, "to cast a snare upon you," to invite or encourage you into a position against which your nature would unceasingly rebel, to prompt you to attempt that for which you are constitutionally unfit, and thereby to make your life a chronic temptation. "Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, another after that." And if any man fancies that, because there are advantages in being unmarried, therefore that is the best state for him, or if, on the other hand, any man fancies that, because most men seem to find great happiness in marriage, he also needs marriage to complete his happiness, both of these men leave out of account that which is chiefly to be taken into account, viz., the special temperament, calling, and opportunities of each.

The common-sense and wise counsel of this chapter are sometimes half jestingly put aside by the idle remark that Paul, being himself unmarried, takes a biassed view of the subject. But the chief merit of the whole passage is that Paul positively and expressly declines to judge others by himself, or himself by others. What is good for one man in this respect is not good, he says, for another; every man must ascertain for himself what is best for him. And this is precisely what is lacking in popular feeling and talk about marriage. People start in life, and are encour-

aged to start in life, on the understanding that their happiness cannot be complete till they are married; that they are in some sense incomplete and unsatisfactory members of society until they marry. Now, on the contrary, people should be taught not to follow one another like sheep, nor to suppose that they will infallibly find happiness where others have found it. They should be taught to consider their own make and bent, and not to take for granted that the cravings they feel for an indefinite addition to their happiness will be satisfied by marriage. They should be taught that marriage is but one out of many paths to happiness, that it is possible celibacy may be the straightest path to happiness for them, and that many persons are so constituted that they are likely to be much more useful unmarried than married. They should, above all, be taught that human life is very wide and multifarious, and that, to effect His ends, God needs persons of all kinds and conditions, so that to prejudge the direction in which our usefulness and happiness are to run is to shut God out of our life. There can be no doubt that the opposite way of speaking of marriage as the great settlement in life has introduced much misery and uselessness into the lives of thousands.

It is this then which not only signally illustrates the judicial balance of the Apostle's mind, but at the same time gives us the key to the whole chapter. The capacity for celibacy is a gift of God to him who possesses it, a gift which may be of eminent service, but to which no moral value can be attached. There are many such diversities of gifts among men, gifts of immense value, but which may belong to bad as well as to good men. For example, two men travel together; the one can go without food for twelve hours, the other

cannot, but if you repair his strength every five hours, he can go through as much fatigue as the other. This power of abstinence is a valuable gift, and has frequently enabled men in certain circumstances to save life or perform other important service. But no one would dream of arguing that because a man possessed this gift, he was therefore a *better* man than his less enduring friend. Unfortunately, so simple a distinction has not been kept in view. In the most powerful Church in the world celibacy is regarded as a virtue in itself, so that men with no natural gift for it have been encouraged to aim at it, with what results we need not say.

But while there is no virtue in remaining unmarried, there is virtue in remaining unmarried for the sake of serving Christ better. Some persons are kept single by mere selfishness; having been accustomed to orderly and quiet ways, they shrink from having their personal peace broken in upon by the claims of children. Some shrink from being tied down to any definite settlement in life; they like to feel unencumbered, and free to shift their tent at short notice. Some dread responsibility and the little and great anxieties of family life. A few have the feeling of the miser, and prefer the possibility of many conceivable marriages to the actuality of one. For such persons to make a virtue of their celibacy is absurd. But all honour to those who recognise that they are called to some duty they could not discharge if married! All honour to that eldest son of an orphaned family who sees that it is not for him to please himself, but to work for those who have none to look to but him! There are here and there persons who from the highest motives decline marriage: persons conscious of some hereditary weakness, phy-

sical or mental; persons who, on a deliberate survey of human life, have seemed to themselves to recognise that they are called to a kind of service with which marriage is incompatible. We may be thankful that in our own country and time there are men and women of sufficiently heroic mould to exemplify the wisdom of the Apostle's counsel. Such devotion is not for every one. There are persons of a soft and domestic temperament who need the supports and comforts of home-life, and nothing can be more cruel and ill-advised than to encourage such persons to turn their life into a channel in which it was never intended to run. But it is equally to be lamented that, where there are women quite capable of a life of self-devotion to some noble work, they should be discouraged from such a life by the false, and foolish, and petty notions of society, and should be taught to believe that the only way in which they can serve their Lord is by caring for the affairs of a single household. No calling is nobler or more worthy of a Christian woman than marriage; but it is not the only calling. There are other callings as noble, and there are callings in which many women will find a much wider field for doing good.

II. St. Paul's counsel to the married. Some of the Corinthians seem to have thought that, because they were new creatures in Christ, their old relations should be abandoned; and they put to Paul the question whether a believing man who had an unbelieving wife ought not to forsake her. Paul had shrewdness enough to see that if a Christian might separate from an unbelieving wife on the sole ground that he was a Christian, this easy mode of divorce might lead to a large and most unwelcome influx of pretended Christians into the Church. He therefore lays down the law that the

power of separation is to rest with the unbelieving, and not with the believing, partner. If the unbelieving wife wishes to separate from her Christian husband, let her do so; but the change from heathenism to Christianity was no reason for sundering the marriage union. It frequently happened in the early ages of the Church that when a man was converted to the Christian faith in middle life, and judged he could serve God better without the encumbrance of a family, he forsook his wife and children and betook himself to a monastery. This directly contravened the law here laid down to abide in the vocation wherein God's call had found him.

The principle, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called," is of wide application. The slave who heard God's call to him to become His child was not to think he must resent being a slave and assert his Christian liberty by requiring emancipation from earthly servitude. On the contrary, he must be content with the inward possession of the freedom Christ had given him, and must show his liberty by the willingness and spontaneity of his submission to all his outward conditions. It is not externals that make a Christian; and if God's grace has found a man in unlikely circumstances, that is the best evidence he can have that he will find opportunity of serving God in those circumstances, if there be no sin in them. It throws great light on the relation which we as Christians hold to the institutions of our country, and generally to outward things, when we understand that Christianity does not begin by making external changes, but begins within and gradually finds its way outwards, modifying and rectifying all it meets.

But the principle to which Paul chiefly trusts, he

enounces in the twenty-ninth verse: "This I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not; . . . for the fashion of this world passeth away." The forms in which human life is now moulded, the kind of business we are now engaged in, the pleasures we enjoy, even the relationships we hold to one another, pass away. There are no doubt relationships which time cannot dissolve, marriages so fit and uniting spirits so essentially kindred that no change can dissolve them, affections so pure and clinging that if the future does not renew them, it loses a large part of its charm for us. But whatever is temporary in our relation to the present world it is foolish so to set our heart on, that death may seem to end all our joy and all our usefulness. We may resent being asked to be moderate and self-restrained in our devotedness to this or that pursuit, but the fact is that the time is short and that the fashion of this world passeth away; and it is surely the part of wisdom to accommodate one's self to fact. In this life we now lead, and underneath all its activities, and forms, and relationships, we have opportunity of laying hold on what is permanent; and if, instead of penetrating through the outward things to the eternal significance and relations they bear, we give ourselves wholly to them, we abuse the world, and pervert it to an end for which it was not intended. The man who is sent abroad for five years would consider it folly to accumulate a large collection of the luxuries of life, furniture, and paintings, and encumbrances; how many times five years do we expect to live, that we should be much concerned to amass goods which we cannot remove to another world? This world is a means,

and not an end; and those use it best who use it in relation to what is to be. They use it not less vigorously, but more wisely, not despising the mould which fashions them to their eternal form, but ever bearing in mind that the mould is to be broken and that what is fashioned by it alone remains. It is the thought of our great future which alone gives us sufficient courage and wisdom to deal with present things intensely and in earnest. For, as a heathen long ago saw and said, "if God make so much of creatures in whom there is nothing permanent, He is like women who sow the seeds of plants within the soil enclosed in an oyster-shell." The very intensity of our interests and affections reminds us that we cannot root ourselves in this present life, but need a larger room.

LIBERTY AND LOVE.

"Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him. As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."—1 Cor. viii. 1—13.

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience' sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience' sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."—1 Cor. x. 23-xi. 1.

XII.

LIBERTY AND LOVE.

THE next question which had been put to Paul by the Corinthian Church, and to which he now replies, is "touching things offered unto idols," whether a Christian had liberty to eat such things or not. This question necessarily arose in a society partly heathen and partly Christian. Every meal was in a manner dedicated to the household gods by laying some portion of it on the family altar. Where one member of a heathen family had become a Christian, he would at once be confronted with the question, rising in his own conscience, whether by partaking of such food he might not be countenancing idolatry. On the occasion of a birthday, or a marriage, or a safe return from sea, or any circumstance that seemed to call for celebration, it was customary to sacrifice in some public temple. And after the legs of the victim, enclosed in fat, and the entrails had been burnt on the altar, the worshipper received the remainder, and invited his friends and guests to partake of it either in the temple itself, or in the surrounding grove, or at his own home. Here again a young convert might very naturally ask himself whether he was justified in attending such a feast and actually sitting down to meat in the idol's presence. Nor was it only personal friendships and the harmony of family life that were threatened; but on public

occasions and national celebrations the Christian was in a strait betwixt two; fearful, on the one hand, of branding himself as no good citizen by abstaining from participation in the feast, fearful, on the other hand, lest by compliance he should be found unfaithful to his new religion. And even though his own family was entirely Christian, the difficulty was not removed, for much of the meat offered in worship found its way into the common market, so that at every meal the Christian ran the risk of eating things sacrificed to idols.

Among the Jews it had always been considered pollution to eat such food. Instances are on record of men dying cheerfully rather than suffer such contamination. Few Jewish Christians could rise to the height of our Lord's maxim, "Not that which goeth into a man defileth him." The Gentile converts also felt the difficulty of at once throwing off all the old associations. When they entered the temple where but a few months ago they had worshipped, the atmosphere of the place intoxicated them; and the long-accustomed sights quickened their pulse and exposed them to serious temptation. Others, less sensitive, could use the temple as they would an ordinary eating-house, without the slightest stirring of idolatrous feeling. Some went to the houses of heathen friends as often as they were invited, and partook of what was set before them, making no minute inquiries as to how the meat had been provided, asking no questions for conscience' sake, but believing that the earth and its fulness were the Lord's, and that what they ate they received from God, and not from an idol. Others, again, could not shake off the feeling that they were countenancing idolatry when they partook of such feasts. Thus there arose a diversity of judgment and a variance in practice

which must have given rise to much annoyance, and which did not appear to be approaching any nearer to a final and satisfactory settlement.

In answer to the appeal made to him on this subject, it might seem that Paul had nothing to do but quote the deliverance of the Council of Jerusalem, which determined that Gentile converts should be commanded to abstain from meats offered to idols. Paul himself had obtained that deliverance, and was satisfied with it; but now he makes no reference to it, and treats the question afresh. In the epistles of the Lord to the Churches, embodied in the Book of Revelation, the eating of things sacrificed to idols is spoken of in strongly condemnatory language; and in one of the very earliest non-canonical documents of the primitive Church we find the precept, "Abstain carefully from things offered to idols, for that is worship of dead gods." Paul's disregard of the decision of the Council is probably due to his belief that that decision was merely provisional and temporary. He had founded Churches which could scarcely be expected to go past himself for guidance; and as the situation in the Corinthian Church was different from what it had been in Antioch, he felt justified in treating the matter afresh. And while in the early Church the partaking of sacrificial food which Paul allowed was sometimes vehemently condemned, this was due to the circumstance that it was sometimes used as a test of a man's abandonment of idolatry. Of course where this was the case no Christian could possibly be in doubt regarding the proper course to follow. What a man may freely do in ordinary circumstances, he may not do if he is warned that certain inferences will be drawn from his action.

The case laid before Paul then belongs to the class known as matters morally indifferent. These are matters upon which conscience does not uniformly give the same verdict even among persons brought up under the same moral law. On mingling with society, every one finds that there are many points of conduct regarding which there is not an unanimous consent of judgment among the most delicately conscientious people, and upon which it is difficult to decide even when we are anxious to do right. Such points are the lawfulness of attending certain places of public amusement, the propriety of allowing one's self to be implicated in certain kinds of private amusements or entertainments, the way of spending Sunday, and the amount of pleasure, refinement, and luxury one may admit into his life.

The state of feeling produced in Corinth by the discussion of such topics is apparent from Paul's mode of treating the question put to him. His answer is addressed to the party who claimed superior knowledge, who wished to be known as the party which stood for liberty of conscience, and probably for the Pauline axiom, "All things are lawful for me." Paul does not directly address those who had scruples about eating, but those who had none. He does not speak to, but only of, the "weak" brethren who had still conscience of the idol. And apparently a good deal of ill-feeling had been engendered in the Corinthian Church by the different views taken. This is always the trouble in connection with morally indifferent matters. They do little harm if each holds his own opinion genially and endeavours to influence others by a friendly statement of his own practice and the grounds of it. But in most instances it happens as in Corinth: those who

saw that they could eat without contamination scorned those who had scruples; while, on their side, the scrupulous judged the eaters to be worldly time-servers, in a perilous state, less godly and consistent than themselves.

As a first step towards the settlement of this matter, Paul makes the largest concession to the party of liberty. Their clear perception that an idol was nothing in the world, a mere bit of timber, and of no more significance to a Christian than a pillar or a doorpost —this knowledge is sound and commendable. At the same time, they need not make quite so much of it as they were doing. In their letter of inquiry they must have emphasized the fact that they were the party of enlightenment, who saw things as they really were, and had freed themselves from fantastic superstitions and antiquated ideas. Quite true, says Paul, "we all have knowledge;" but you need not remind me at every turn of your superior discernment of the Christian's true position nor of your wonderfully sagacious discovery that an idol is nothing in the world. Any Jewish schoolboy could have told you this. I know that you understand the principles which should regulate your intercourse with the heathen much better than the scrupulous do, and that your views of liberty are my own. Let us then hear no more of this. Do not always be returning upon this, as if this settled the whole matter. You are in the right so far as regards knowledge, and your brethren are weak; let that be conceded: but do not suppose you settle the question or impress me more strongly with the righteousness of your conduct by reiterating that you, whom your brethren call lax and misguided, are better instructed in the principle of Christian conduct than they. Once for all, I know this.

Does this then not settle the question? If—the party of liberty might say—if we are right, if the idol is nothing, and an idol's temple no more than an ordinary dining-room, does this not settle the whole matter? By no means, says Paul. "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." You have as yet grasped only one end, and that the weaker end, of the Christian rule. You must add love, consideration of your neighbour, to your knowledge. Without this, knowledge is unwholesome and as likely to do harm as to do good. In very similar terms the founder of the Positive philosophy speaks of the evil results of loveless knowledge. "I am free to confess," he says, "that hitherto the Positive spirit has been tainted with the two moral evils which peculiarly wait on knowledge. It puffs up, and it dries the heart, by giving free scope to pride and by turning it from love." It is indeed matter of everyday observation that men of ready insight into moral and spiritual truth are prone to despise the less enlightened spirits that stumble among the scruples which, like the bats of the moral twilight, fly in their faces. The knowledge which is not tempered by humility and love does harm both to its possessor and to other Christians; it puffs up its possessor with scorn, and it alienates and embitters the less enlightened. Knowledge without love, knowledge which does not take into consideration the difficulties and scruples of brethren, cannot be admired or commended, for though in itself a good thing and capable of being used for the advancement of the Church, knowledge dissociated from charity can do good neither to him who possesses it nor to the Christian community. However the possessors of such knowledge vaunt themselves as the men of progress and the hope of the Church, it is not

by knowledge alone the Church can ever solidly grow. Knowledge does produce an appearance of growth, a puffing up, an unhealthy, morbid growth, a mushroom, fungous growth; but that which builds up the Church stone by stone, a strong, enduring edifice, is love. It is a good thing to have clear views of Christian liberty, to have definite, firmly held ideas of Christian conduct, to discard fretting scruples and idle superstitions; add love to this knowledge, exercise it in a tender, patient, self-denying, considerate, loving way, and you edify both yourself and the Church: but exercise it without love, and you become a poor inflated creature, puffed up with a noxious gas destructive of all higher life in yourself and in others.

Paul's law then is that liberty must be tempered by love; that the individual must consider the society of which he forms a part; and that, after his own conscience is satisfied regarding the legitimacy of certain actions, he must further consider how the conscience of his neighbour will be affected if he uses his liberty and does these actions. He must endeavour to keep step with the Christian community of which he forms a part, and must beware of giving offence to less enlightened persons by his freer conduct. He must consider not only whether he himself can do this or that with a good conscience, but also how the conscience of those who know what he does will be affected by it.

Applying this law to the matter in hand, Paul declares that, for his own part, he has no scruples at all about meat. "Meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse." If therefore I had to consult only my own conscience, the matter would

admit of prompt and easy solution. I would as soon eat in an idol's temple as anywhere else. But all have not the conviction we have that an idol is nothing in the world. Some are unable to rid themselves of the feeling that in eating sacrificial meat they are paying an act of homage to the idol. "Some with conscience of the idol," with the feeling that the idol is present and accepting the worship, "eat the sacrificial meat as a thing offered unto an idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled." Their conscience is weak, not fully enlightened, not purged of old superstition; but their conscience is their conscience: and if they feel they are doing a wrong thing and yet do it, they do a wrong thing, and defile their conscience. Therefore we must consider them as well as ourselves, for as often as we use our liberty and eat sacrificial meat we tempt them to do the same, and so to defile their conscience. They know that you are men of sound and clear spiritual discernment; they look up to you as guides: and if they see you who have knowledge sitting at meat in the idol's temple, must not they be emboldened to do the same, and so to stain and harden their own conscience?

It is easy to imagine how this would be exemplified at a Corinthian table. Three Christians are invited, with other guests, to a party in the house of a heathen friend. One of these invited Christians is weakly scrupulous, unable to disentangle himself from the old idolatrous associations connected with sacrificial meat. The other two Christians are men of ampler view and more enlightened conscience, and have the deepest conviction that scruples about eating at a heathen table are baseless. All three recline at

the table; but, as the meal goes on, the anxious, scrutinizing eye of the weak brother discerns some mark which identifies the meat as sacrificial, or, fearing it may be so, he inquires of the servant, and finds it has been offered in the temple: and at once he draws the attention of his Christian friends to this, saying, "This has been offered in sacrifice to idols." One of his friends, knowing that heathen eyes are watching, and wishing to show how superior to all such scruples the enlightened Christian is and how genial and free a religion is the religion of Christ, smiles at his friend's scruples, and accepts the meat. The other, quite as clear-sighted and free from superstition, but more generous and more truly courageous, accommodates himself to the scruple of the weak brother, and declines the dish, lest by eating and leaving the scrupulous man without support he should tempt him to follow their example, contrary to his own conviction, and so lead him into sin. It need not be said which of these men acts the friendly part and comes nearest to the Christian principle of Paul.

In our own society similar cases necessarily arise. I, as a Christian man, and knowing that the earth and its fulness are the Lord's, may feel at perfect liberty to drink wine. Had I only myself to consider, and knowing that my temptation does not lie that way, I might use wine regularly or as often as I felt disposed to enjoy a needed stimulant. I may feel quite convinced in my own mind that morally I am not one whit the worse of doing so. But I cannot determine whether I am to indulge myself or not without considering the effect my conduct will have on others. There may be among my friends some who know that their temptation does lie that way, and whose conscience bids them

altogether refrain. If by my example such persons are encouraged to silence the voice of their own conscience, then I incur the incalculable guilt of helping to destroy a brother for whom Christ died.

Or again, a lad has had the great good fortune to be brought up in a Puritanic household, and has imbibed stringent moral principles, with perhaps somewhat narrow ideas. He has been taught, together with much else of the same character, that the influence of the theatre is in our country demoralizing, that one day in the week is little enough to give to the claims of spiritual education, and so forth. But on entering the life of a great city he is soon brought in contact with men whose uprightness, and sagacity, and Christian spirit he cannot but respect, but who yet read their weekly paper, or any book they are interested in, as freely on Sunday as on Saturday, and who visit the theatre without the slightest twinge of conscience. Now either of two things will probably happen in such a case. The young man's ideas of Christian liberty may become clearer. He may attain the standpoint of Paul, and may see that fellowship with Christ can be maintained in conditions of life he once absolutely condemned. Or the young man may not grow in Christian perception, but being daunted by overpowering example, and chafing under the raillery of his companions, may do as others do, though still uneasy in his own conscience.

What is to be observed about this process, which is ceaselessly going on in society, is that the emboldening of conscience is one thing, its enlightenment quite another. And were it possible to get statistics of the proportion of cases in which the one process goes on without the other, these statistics might be salutary.

But we need no statistics to assure us that Christian people by selfishly using their own liberty do continually lead less enlightened persons to trample on their scruples and disregard their own conscience. Constantly it happens in every department of human life that men who once shrank from certain practices as wrong now freely engage in them, although they are not in their own mind any more clearly convinced of their legitimacy than they were before, but are merely emboldened by the example of others. Such persons, if possessed of any self-observation and candour, will tell you that at first they felt as if they were stealing the indulgence or the gain the practice brings, and that they had to drown the voice of conscience by the louder voice of example.

The results of this are disastrous. Conscience is dethroned. The ship no longer obeys her helm, and lies in the trough of the sea swept by every wave and driven by every wind. It may indeed be said, What harm can come of persons less enlightened being emboldened to do as we do if what we do is right? Is not that, most strictly speaking, edification? It is not as if we emboldened any one to transgress the moral law; we are merely bringing our weak brother's conduct up to the level of our own. Do we not act wisely and well in so doing? Again it must be answered, No, because, while yielding themselves to the influence of your example, these persons abandon the guidance of their own conscience, which may be a less enlightened, but is certainly a more authoritative, guide than you. If the weak brother does a right thing while his conscience tells him it is a wrong thing, to him it is a wrong thing. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" that is to say, whatsoever is not dictated

by a thorough conviction that it is right is sin. It is sin which in some respects is more dangerous than a sin of passion or impulse. By a sin of passion the conscience is not directly injured, and may remain comparatively tender and healthy ; but when you refuse to acknowledge conscience as your guide and accept some other person's conduct as that which may dictate to you what you may or may not do, you dethrone conscience, and sap your moral nature. You shut your own eyes, and prefer to be led by the hand of another person, which may indeed serve you on this occasion ; but the end will be a dog and a string.

Two permanent lessons are preserved in this exposition which Paul gives of the matter laid before him. The first is the sacredness or supremacy of conscience. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind;" that is the one legitimate source of conduct. A man may possibly do a wrong thing when he obeys conscience; he is certainly wrong when he acts contrary to conscience. He may be helped to a decision by the advice of others, but it is his own decision by which he must abide. He must act, not on the conviction of others, but on his own. It is what he himself sees that must guide him. He is bound to use every means to enlighten his conscience and to learn with accuracy what is right and allowable, but he is also bound always to act upon his own present perception of what is right. His conscience may not be as enlightened as it ought to be. Still his duty is to enlighten, not to violate, it. It is the guide God has given us, and we must not choose another.

The second lesson is that we must ever use our Christian liberty with Christian consideration of others. Love must mingle with all we do. There are many

things which are lawful for a Christian, but which are not compulsory or obligatory, and which he may refrain from doing on cause shown. Duties he must of course discharge, regardless of the effect his conduct may have on others. He may be quite sure he will be misunderstood; he may be sure evil motives will be imputed to him; he may be sure disastrous consequences will be the first result of his action; but if conscience says this or that *must* be done, then all thought of consequences must be thrown to the winds. But where conscience says, not "You must," but only "You may," then we must consider the effect our using our liberty will have on others. We lie as Christians under an obligation to consider others, to lay aside all pride of advanced ideas, and this not merely that we may submit ourselves to those who know better than we, but that we may not offend those who are bound by prejudices of which we are rid. We must limit our liberty by the scrupulosity of prejudiced, narrow-minded, weak people. We must forego our liberty to do this or that if by doing it we should shock or disturb a weak brother or encourage him to overstep his conscience. As the Arctic voyager who has been frozen up all winter does not seize the first opportunity to escape, but waits till his weaker companions gain strength enough to accompany him, so must the Christian accommodate himself to the weaknesses of others, lest by using his liberty he should injure him for whom Christ died. Never was there a man who more fully understood the freedom of the Christian position than Paul; no man was ever more entirely lifted out of the mist of superstition and formalism into the clear light of free, eternal life: but with this freedom he carried a sympathy with weak and entangled beginners which

prompted him to exclaim, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

Our conduct must be limited and to a certain extent regulated by the narrow-mindedness, the scruples, the prejudices, the weakness in short, of others. We cannot say, I see my way to do so-and-so, let my friend think what he pleases; I am not to be trammelled by his superstition or ignorance; let my conduct have what effect it will on him; I am not responsible for that; if he does not see it to be right, I do, and I will act accordingly. We cannot speak thus if the matter be indifferent; if it be a matter we can lawfully abstain from, then abstain we must if we would follow the Apostle who followed Christ. This is the practical law which stands in the forefront of Christ's teaching and was sealed by every day of His life. It is enounced not only by St. Paul: "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died;" "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died," but also in our Lord's still more emphatic words, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Paul could not look on his weak brethren as narrow-minded bigots, could not call them hard names and ride rough-shod over their scruples; and to this delicate consideration he was aided by the remembrance that these were the persons for whom Christ died. For them Christ sacrificed, not merely a little feeling or a little of His own way, but His own will and self entirely. And the spirit of Christ is still manifested in all in whom He dwells, specially in a humility and yieldingness of disposition which is

not led by self-interest or self-complacency, but seeks the weal of other men. Nothing shows us more distinctly the thorough manner in which St. Paul partook of the spirit of Christ than his ability to say, "I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY.

"Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the Law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the Gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me. What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the Gospel. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the Law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."—1 Cor. ix. 1–22.

CHAPTER XIII.

MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY.

IN the preceding chapter Paul has disposed of the question put to him regarding meats offered in sacrifice to idols. He has taken occasion to point out that in matters morally indifferent Christian men will consider the scruples of weak, and prejudiced, and superstitious people. He has inculcated the duty of accommodating ourselves to the consciences of less enlightened persons, if we can do so without violating our own. For his own part, he is prepared, while the world standeth, to abridge his Christian liberty, if by his using that liberty he may imperil the conscience of any weak brother. But keeping pace, as Paul always does, with the thought of those he writes to, he no sooner makes this emphatic statement than it occurs to him that those in Corinth who are ill-affected towards him will make a handle even of his self-denial, and will whisper or boldly declare that it is all very fine for Paul to use this language, but that, in point of fact, the precarious position he holds in the Church makes it incumbent on him to deny himself and become all things to all men. His apostleship stands on so insecure a basis that he has no option in the matter, but must curry favour with all parties. He is not on the same platform as the original Apostles, who may reasonably stand upon their apostleship, and claim

exemption from manual labour, and demand maintenance both for themselves and their wives. Paul remains unmarried, and works with his hands to support himself, and makes himself weak among the weak, because he has no claim to maintenance and is aware that his apostleship is doubtful. He proceeds therefore, with some pardonable warmth and righteous indignation, to assert his freedom and apostleship (vers. 1, 2), and to prove his right to the same privileges and maintenance as the other Apostles (3—14); and then from the fifteenth to the eighteenth verse he gives the true reason for his foregoing his rightful claim; and in vers. 19—22 he reaffirms the principle on which he uniformly acted, becoming "all things to all men," suiting himself to the innocent prejudices and weaknesses of all, "that he might by all means save some."

Paul then had certain rights which he was resolved should be acknowledged, although he waived them. He maintains that if he saw fit, he might require the Church to maintain him, and to maintain him not merely in the bare way in which he was content to live, but to furnish him with the ordinary comforts of life. He might, for example, he says, require the Church to enable him to keep a wife and to pay not only his own, but her, travelling expenses. The other Apostles apparently took their wives with them on their apostolic journeys, and may have found them useful in gaining access for the Gospel to the secluded women of Eastern and Greek cities. He might also, he says, "forbear working;" might cease, that is to say, from his tent-making and look to his converts for support. He is indignant at the sordid, or malicious, or mistaken spirit which could deny him such support.

This claim to support and privilege Paul rests on

several grounds. 1. He is an apostle, and the other Apostles enjoyed these privileges. "Have we not power to take with us a Christian woman as a wife, as well as other Apostles? . . . Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?" His proof of his apostleship is summary: "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?" No one could be an apostle who had not seen Jesus Christ after His resurrection. The Apostles were to be witnesses to the Resurrection, and were qualified to be so by seeing the Lord alive after death. But it seems to have been commonly urged against Paul that he had not been among those to whom Christ showed Himself after He rose from the dead. Paul therefore both in his reported speeches and in his letters insists upon the fact that on the way to Damascus he had seen the risen Lord.

But not every one who had seen the Lord after His resurrection was an apostle, but those only who by Him were commissioned to witness to it; and that Paul had been thus commissioned he thinks the Corinthians may conclude from the results among themselves of his preaching. The Church at Corinth was the seal of his apostleship. What was the use of quibbling about the time and manner of his ordination, when the reality and success of his apostolic work were so apparent? The Lord had acknowledged his work. In presence of the finished structure that draws the world to gaze, it is too late to ask if he who built it is an architect. Would that every minister could so prove the validity of his orders!

2. Paul maintains his right to support on the principle of remuneration everywhere observed in human affairs. The soldier does not go to war at his own

expense, but expects to be equipped and maintained in efficiency by those for whom he fights. The vine-dresser, the shepherd, every labourer, expects, and is certainly warranted in expecting, that the toil he expends will at least have the result of keeping him comfortably in life. However difficult it is to lay down an absolute law of wages, this may at least be affirmed as a natural principle: that labour of all kinds must be so paid as to maintain the labourer in life and efficiency; and it may be added that there are certain inalienable human rights, such as the right to bring up a family the members of which shall be useful and not burdensome to society, the right to some reserve of leisure and of strength which the labourer may use for his own enjoyment and advantage, which rights will be admitted and provided for when out of the confused war of theories, and strikes, and competition a just law of wages has been won. Happily no one now needs to be told that one of the most striking results of our modern civilisation is that the nineteenth century labourer has less of the joy of life than the ancient slave, and that we have forgotten the fundamental law that the husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

And lest any one should sanctimoniously or ignorantly say, "These secular principles have no application to sacred things," Paul anticipates the objection, and dismisses it: "Say I these things as a man? or saith not the Law the same also?" I am not introducing into a sacred region principles which rule only in secular matters. Does not the Law say, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn"? It must be allowed to live by its labour. As it threshes out the wheat, it must be allowed to feed itself, mouthful

by mouthful, as it goes on with its work. And this was not said in the Law because God had any special care for oxen, but in order to give expression to the law which must regulate the connection between all labourers and their work that he that plougheth may plough in hope, may have a personal interest in his work, and may give himself ungrudgingly to it, assured that he himself will be the first to benefit by it.

This law that a man shall live by his labour is a two-edged law. If a man produce what the community needs, he should himself profit by the production; but, on the other hand, if a man will not work, neither should he eat. Only the man who produces what other men need, only the man who by his industry or capability contributes to the good of the community, has any right to profits. Quick and easy manipulations of money, shrewd and risky dexterities which yield no real benefit to the community, deserve no remuneration. It is a blind, sordid, and contemptible spirit that hastes to be rich by one or two successful transactions that profit no one. A man should be content to live on what he is worth to the community. Here also our minds are often confused by the complexities of business; but on that account it is all the more necessary that we firmly adhere to the few essential canons, such as that "trading ceases to be just when it ceases to benefit both parties," or that a man's wealth should truly represent his value to society. Conscience enlightened by allegiance to the Spirit of Christ is a much more satisfactory guide for the individual in trade, speculation, and investment than any trade customs or economic theories.

3. A third ground on which Paul rests his claim to be supported by the Church is ordinary gratitude:

"If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" Some of the Churches founded by Paul spontaneously acknowledged this claim, and wished to free him from the necessity of labouring for his own support. They felt that the benefit they had derived from him could not be stated in terms of money; but prompted by irrepressible gratitude, they could not but seek to relieve him from manual labour and set him free for higher work. This method of gauging the amount of spiritual benefit absorbed, by its overflow in material aid given to the propagation of the Gospel would, I daresay, scarcely be relished by that monstrous development the niggardly Christian.

4. Lastly, Paul argues from the Levitical usage to the Christian. Both in heathen countries and among the Jews it was customary that they who ministered in holy things should live by the offerings of the people to the temple. Levites and priests alike had been thus maintained among the Jews. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." Were there no recorded command of the Lord to this effect, we might suppose Paul merely argued that this was the Lord's will; but among the original instructions given to the seventy who were first sent to preach the kingdom of heaven, we find this: "Into whatsoever house ye enter, there remain, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the labourer is worthy of his hire."

That evils may result from the existence of a paid ministry no one will be disposed to deny. Some of the most disastrous abuses in the Church of Christ, as well as some of the gravest political troubles, could

never have arisen had there been no desirable benefices. Lucrative ecclesiastical posts and offices have necessarily excited the avarice of unworthy aspirants, and have weakened instead of strengthening the Church's influence. Many wealthy ecclesiastics have done nothing for the benefit of the people, whereas many laymen by their unpaid devotedness have done much. In view of these and other evils, it cannot surprise us to find that again and again it has occurred to good men to suppose that on the whole Christianity might be more effectively propagated were there no separate class of men set apart to this work as their sole occupation. But this idea is reactionary and extreme, and is condemned both by common-sense and by the express declarations of our Lord and His Apostles. If the work of the ministry is to be thoroughly done, men must give their whole time to it. Like every other professional work, it will often be done inadequately; and I daresay there is much in our methods which is unwise and susceptible of improvement: but the ministry keeps pace with the general intelligence of the country, and may be trusted to adapt its methods, even though too tardily for some ardent spirits, to the actual necessities. And if men give their whole time to the work, they must be paid for it, a circumstance which is not likely to lead to much evil in our own country so long as the great mass of ministers are paid as they presently are. It is hardly the profession which is likely to be chosen by any one who is anxious to coin his life into money. If the laity consider that covetousness is more unseemly in a Christian minister than in a Christian man, they have taken an effectual means of barring out that vice.

Paul felt himself the more free to urge these claims because his custom was to forego them all in his own case. "I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me; for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void." Here again we come upon the sound judgment and honest heart that are never biassed by his own personal circumstances or insist that what is fit for him is fit for every one. How apt are self-denying men to spoil their self-denial by dropping a sneer at the weaker souls that cannot follow their heroic example. How ready are men who can live on little and accomplish much to leave the less robust Christians to justify on their own account their need of human comforts. Not so Paul. He first fights the battle of the weak for them, and then disclaims all participation in the spoils. What a nobility and sagacity in the man who himself would accept no remuneration for his work, and who yet, so far from thinking slightingly of those who did or even being indifferent to them, argues their case for them with an authoritative force they did not themselves possess!

Nor does he consider that his self-denial is at all meritorious. He has no desire to signalize himself as more disinterested than other men. On the contrary, he strives to make it appear as if this course were compulsory and as if no choice were left to him. His fear was that if he took remuneration, he "should hinder the Gospel of Christ." Some of the best incomes in Greece in Paul's day were made by clever lecturers and talkers, who attracted disciples, and initiated them into their doctrines and methods. Paul was resolved he should never be mistaken for one of these. And no doubt his success was partly due to the fact that

men recognised that his teaching was a labour of love, and that he was impelled by the truth and importance of his message. Every man finds an audience who is inwardly impelled to speak; who speaks, not because he is paid for doing so, but because there is that in him which must find utterance.

This, says Paul, was his case. "Though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!" His call to the ministry had been so exceptional, and had so distinctly and emphatically declared the grace and purpose of Christ, that he felt bound by all that can constrain a man to the devotedness of a lifetime. Paul felt what we now so clearly see: that on him lay the gravest responsibilities. Had he declined to preach, had he complained of bad usage, and stipulated for higher terms, and withdrawn from the active propagation of Christianity, who would or could have taken up the task he laid down? But while Paul could not but be conscious of his importance to the cause of Christ, he would arrogate to himself no credit on account of his arduous toil, for from this, he says, he could not escape; necessity was laid upon him. Whether he does his work willingly or unwillingly, still he must do it. He dare not flinch. If he does it willingly, he has a reward; if he does it unwillingly, still he is entrusted with a stewardship he dare not neglect. What then is the reward he has, giving himself, as he certainly does, *willingly* to the work? His reward is that "when he preaches the Gospel he makes the Gospel of Christ without charge." The deep satisfaction he felt in dissociating the Gospel of self-sacrifice from every thought of money or remuneration and in offering it freely to the poorest as his Master's

fit representative was sufficient reward for him and incalculably greater than any other he ever got or could conceive.

In other words, Paul saw that however it might be with other men, with him there was no alternative but to preach the Gospel; the only alternative was—was he to do it as a slave entrusted with a stewardship, and who was compelled, however reluctant he might be, to be faithful, or was he to do it as a free man, with his whole will and heart? The reluctant slave could expect no reward; he was but fulfilling an obligatory, inevitable duty. The free man might, however, expect a reward; and the reward Paul chose was that he should have none—none in the ordinary sense, but really the deepest and most abiding of all: the satisfaction of knowing that, having freely received, he had freely given, and had lifted the Gospel into a region quite undimmed by the suspicion of self-seeking or any mists of worldliness.

In declining pecuniary remuneration, Paul was acting on his general principle of making himself the servant of all and of living entirely and exclusively for the good of others. "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more." It was from Paul that Luther derived his two propositions which he uttered as the keynote of the resonant blast "on Christian Liberty" with which he stirred all Europe into new life: "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one." So Paul's independence of all men was assumed and maintained for the very purpose of making himself the more effectually the servant of all. To the Jew and to those under the Law he became

as a Jew, observing the seventh day, circumcising Timothy, abstaining from blood, accommodating himself to all their scruples. To those who were without the Law, and who had been brought up in Greece, he also conformed himself, freely entering into their innocent customs, calling no meats unclean, appealing, not to the law of Moses, but to conscience, to common-sense, to their own poets. "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some"—a course which none but a man of wide sympathy and charity, clear intellect, and thorough integrity can adopt.

For Paul was no mere latitudinarian. While accommodating himself to the practice of those around him in all matters of mere outward observance, and which did not touch the essentials of morality and faith, he at the same time held very definite opinions on the chief articles of the Christian creed. No amount of liberality of sentiment can ever induce a thoughtful man to discourage the formation of opinion on all matters of importance. On the contrary, the only escape from mere traditionalism or the tyranny of authority in matters of religion is in individual inquiry and ascertainment of the truth. Free inquiry is the one instrument we possess for the discovery of truth; and by pursuing such inquiry men may be expected to come to some agreement in religious belief, as in other things. No doubt righteousness of life is better than soundness of creed. But is it not possible to have both? It is better to live in the Spirit, to be meek, chaste, temperate, just, loving, than to understand the relation of the Spirit to God and to ourselves; but the human mind can never cease to seek satisfaction: and truth, the more clearly it is seen, will the more effectually nourish righteousness.

Again, Paul had an end in view which preserved his liberality from degenerating. He sought to recommend himself to men, not for his sake, but for theirs. He saw that conscientious scruples were not to be confounded with malignant hatred of truth, and that if we are to be helpful to others, we must begin by appreciating the good they already possess. Hostile criticism or argument for the sake of victory produces no results worth having. Vain exultation in the victors, obstinacy and bitterness in the vanquished—these are worse than useless, the retrograde results of unsympathetic argument. In order to remove a man's difficulties, you must look at them from his point of view and feel the pressure he feels. "The greatest orator save one of antiquity has left it on record that he always studied his adversary's case with as great, if not still greater, intensity than even his own;"[1] and certainly those who have not entered into the point of view of those who differ from them are not likely to have anything of importance to say to them. In order to "gain" men, you must credit them with some desire to see the truth, and you must have sympathy enough to see with their eyes. Parents sometimes weaken their influence with their children by inability to look at things with the eyes of youth, and by an insistence upon the outward expressions of religion which are distasteful to children and suitable only for adults. Children have a high esteem for justice and courage, and can respond to exhibitions of self-sacrifice, and truth, and purity; that is to say, they have a capacity for admiring and adopting the essentials of the Christian character, but if we insist upon them exhibiting feelings which are

[1] See Mill's *Liberty*, p. 21.

alien to their nature and practices necessarily distasteful and futile, we are more likely to drive them from religion than to attract them to it. Let us beware of insisting on alterations in conduct where these are not absolutely necessary. Let us beware of identifying religion in the minds of the young with a rigid conformity in outward things, and not with an inward spirit of love and goodness. Are you striving to gain some? Then let these words of the Apostle warn you not to seek for the wrong thing, not to begin at the wrong end, not to measure the hold which truth has over those you seek to win, by the exactness with which all your ideas are carried out and all your customs observed. Human nature is an infinitely various thing, and often there is the truest regard for what is holy and Divine disguised under a violent departure from all ordinary ways of manifesting reverence and piety. Put yourself in the place of the inquiring, perplexed, embittered soul, find out the good that is in it, patiently accommodate yourself to its ways so far as you legitimately may, and you will be rewarded by "gaining some."

NOT ALL WHO RUN WIN.

"And this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."—1 Cor. ix. 23-27.

XIV

NOT ALL WHO RUN WIN.

IN the preceding part of this chapter Paul has proved his right to claim remuneration from those to whom he preached the Gospel, and he has also given his reasons for declining to urge this claim. He was resolved that no one should have any ground for misapprehending his motive in preaching the Gospel. He was quite content to live a bare, poor life, not merely that he might keep himself above suspicion, but that those who heard the Gospel might see it simply as the Gospel and not be hindered from accepting it by any thought of the preacher's motives. This was his main reason for supporting himself by his own labour. But he had another reason, namely, "that he might be himself a partaker of the benefits he preached" (ver. 23). Apostle though he was, he had his own salvation to work out. He was not himself saved by proclaiming salvation to others, no more than the baker is fed by making bread for others or the physician kept in health by prescribing for others. Paul had a life of his own to lead, a duty of his own to discharge, a soul of his own to save; and he recognised that what was laid before him as the path to salvation was to make himself entirely the servant of others. This he was resolved persistently to do, "lest that by any means, when he

had preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away."

Paul had evidently felt this danger to be a serious one. He had found himself tempted from time to time to rest in the name and calling of an apostle, to take for granted that his salvation was a thing past doubt and on which no more thought or effort need be expended. And he saw that in a slightly altered form this temptation was common to all Christians. All have the name, not all the reality. And the very possession of the name is a temptation to forget the reality. It might almost seem to be in the proportion of runners to winners in a race: "All run, but one receiveth the prize."

In endeavouring to warn Christians against resting in a mere profession of faith in Christ, he cites two great classes of instances which prove that there is often ultimate failure even where there has been considerable promise of success. First, he cites their own world-renowned Isthmian games, in which contests, as they all well knew, not every one who entered for the prizes was successful: "All run, but one receiveth the prize." Paul does not mean that salvation goes by competition; but he means that as in a race not all who run run so as to obtain the prize for which they run, so in the Christian life not all who enter it put out sufficient energy to bring them to a happy issue. The mere fact of recognising that the prize is worth winning and even of entering for it is not enough. And then he cites another class of instances with which the Jews in the Corinthian Church were familiar. "*All* our fathers," he says, "were under the cloud, and *all* passed through the sea, and *all* were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." All of them without exception

enjoyed the outward privileges of God's people, and seemed to be in a fair way of entering the promised land; and yet the majority of them fell under God's displeasure, and were overthrown in the wilderness. Therefore "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

The Isthmian games, then, one of the most ancient glories of Corinth, furnished Paul with the readiest illustration of his theme. These games, celebrated every second year, had in ancient times been one of the chief means of fostering the feeling of brotherhood in the Hellenic race. None but Greeks of pure blood who had done nothing to forfeit their citizenship were allowed to contend in them. They were the greatest of national gatherings; and even when one State was at war with another, hostilities were suspended during the celebration of the games. And scarcely any greater distinction could be earned by a Greek citizen than victory in these games. When Paul says that the contending athletes endured their severe training and underwent all the privations necessary "to obtain a corruptible crown," we must remember that while it is quite true that the wreath of pine given to the victor might fade before the year was out, he was welcomed home with all the honours of a victorious general, the wall of his town being thrown down that he might pass in as a conqueror, and his statue being set up by his fellow-citizens. In point of fact, the names and deeds of many of the victors may yet be read in the verses of one of the greatest of Greek poets, who devoted himself, as laureate of the games, to the celebration of the annual victories.

But however highly we raise the value of the Greek crown the force of Paul's comparison remains. The

wreath of the victor in the games was at the best corruptible, liable to decay. No permanent, eternal satisfaction could result from being victorious in a contest of physical strength, activity, or skill. But for every man it is possible to win an incorruptible crown, that which shall always and for ever be to him a joy as thrilling and a distinction as honourable as at the moment he received it. There is that which is worthy of the determined and sustained effort of a lifetime. Put into the one scale all perishable distinctions, and honours, and prizes, all that has stimulated men to the most strenuous endeavours, all that a grateful nation bestows on its heroes and benefactors, all for which men "scorn delights and live laborious days;" and all these kick the beam when you put in the other scale the incorruptible crown. The two are not necessarily opposed or incompatible; but to choose the less in preference to the greater is to repudiate our birthright. As victory in the games was the actual incentive which stimulated the youth of Greece to attain the perfection of physical strength, beauty, and development, so there is laid before us an incentive which, when clearly apprehended, is sufficient to carry us forward to perfect moral attainment. The brightest jewel in the incorruptible crown is the joy of having become all God made us to become, of perfectly fulfilling the end of our creation, of being able to find happiness in goodness, in closest fellowship with God, in promoting what Christ lived and died to promote. Must we say that there are men who have no ambition to experience perfect rectitude and purity? Are we to conclude that there are men of so grovelling, besotted, and blind a spirit that when opportunity is given them to win true glory, perfect expansion and growth of spirit, and perfect joy

they turn away to salaries and profits, to meat and drink, to frivolity and the world's routine? The incorruptible crown is held over their head; but so intent are they on the muck-rake, they do not even see it.

To those who would win it Paul gives these directions:—

1. Be temperate. "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." Contentedly and without a murmur he submits himself to the rules and restrictions of his ten months' training, without which he may as well not compete. The little indulgences which other men allow themselves he must forego. Not once will he break the trainer's rules, for he knows that some competitors will refrain even from that once and gain strength while he is losing it. He is proud of his little hardships, and fatigues, and privations, and counts it a point of honour scrupulously to abstain from anything which might in the slightest degree diminish his chance of success. He sees other men giving way to appetite, resting while he is panting with exertion, luxuriating in the bath, enjoying life at pleasure; but he has scarce a passing thought of envy, because his heart is set on the prize, and severe training is indispensable. He knows that his chances are gone if in any point or on any occasion he relaxes the rigour of the discipline.

The contest in which Christians are engaged is not less, but more, severe. The temperance maintained by the athlete must be outdone by the Christian if he is to be successful. There are many things in which men who have no thought of the incorruptible prize may engage, but from which the Christian must refrain. All that lowers the tone and slackens the energies must be abandoned. If the Christian indulges in the

pleasures of life as freely as other men, if he is unconscious of any severity of self-restraint, if he denies himself nothing which others enjoy, he proves that he has no higher aim than they and can of course win no higher prize. The temperance here enjoined, and which the Christian practises, not because it is enjoined, but because a higher aim truly cherished compels him to practise it, is a habitual sober-mindedness and detachment from what is worldly in the world. It is that temper of spirit and that sustained attitude towards life which enable a man to rule his own desires, to endure hardness and find pleasure in so doing. No spasmodic, occasional efforts and partial abstinences will ever bring a man victorious to the goal. Many a man denies himself in one direction and indulges himself in another. He macerates the flesh, but pampers the spirit by vanity, ambition, or self-righteousness. Or he denies himself some of the pleasures of life, but is more besotted by its gains than other men. Temperance to be effectual must be complete. The athlete who drinks more than is good for him may save himself the trouble of observing the trainer's rules as to what he eats. It is lost labour to develop some of his muscles if he do not develop all of them. If he offends in one point, he breaks the whole law.

Temperance must be continuous as well as complete. One day's debauch was enough to undo the result of weeks during which the athlete had carefully attended to the rules prescribed. And we find that one lapse into worldliness undoes what years of self-restraint have won. Always the work of growth is very slow, the work of destruction very quick. One indiscretion on the part of the convalescent will undo what the car

of months has slowly achieved. One fraud spoils the character for honesty which years of upright living have earned. And this also is one of the great dangers of the spiritual life: that a little carelessness, a brief infidelity to our high calling, or a passing indulgence suddenly demolishes what long and patient toil has been building up. It is like the taking out of a pin or a ratchet that lets all we have gained run down to its old condition.

Beware then of giving place to the world or the flesh at any point. Be reasonable and true. Recognise that if you are to succeed in winning eternal life, all the spiritual energy you can command will be required. So set your heart on the attainment of things eternal that you will not grudge missing much that other men enjoy and possess. Measure the invitations of life by their fitness or unfitness to develop within you true spiritual energy.

2. Be decided. "I run," says Paul, "not as uncertainly," not as a man who does not know where he is going or has not made up his mind to go there. To be among those who win as well as among those who run, we must know where we are going, and be quite sure we mean to be there. We have all some kind of idea about what God offers and calls us to. But this idea must be clear if we are to make for it straight. No man can run straight to a mere will-o'-the-wisp, and no man can run straight who first means to go to one house or station and then changes his mind and thinks he should go to another. We must count the cost and see clearly what we are to gain and what we must lose by making for the incorruptible prize. We must be resolved to win and have no thought of defeat, of failure, of doing something better. It is the absence

of deliberate choice and reasonable decision which causes such "uncertain" running on the part of many who profess to be in the race. Their faces are as often turned from the goal as towards it. They are evidently not clear in their own minds that all strength spent in any other direction than towards the goal is wasted. They do not distinctly know what they mean to be at, what they wish to make of life. Paul did know. He had made up his mind not to pursue comfort, learning, money, respect, position, but to seek first the kingdom of God. He judged that to spread the knowledge of Christ was the best use to which he could put his life. He knew where he was going and to what all his efforts tended. Every life is unsatisfactory until its owner has made up his mind what he means to do with it, until it is governed by a clearly conceived and firmly held aim. Then it flies like the arrow to its mark.

What then do the traces of our past life show? Do we see the straight track of a well-steered ship, which has deviated not a yard from its course nor wasted an ounce of power? Has every footfall been in direct advance of the last, and has all expenditure of energy brought us nearer the ultimate goal? Or are the traces we look back on like ground trodden by dancers, a confused medley all in one spot, or like the footsteps of saunterers in a garden backwards and forwards, according as this or that has attracted them? Has not the course of many of us been like that of persons lost, uncertain which direction to pursue, eagerly starting off, but after a little slackening their pace, stopping, looking round, and then going off in another direction? For some weeks a great deal of ardour has been apparent, the whole man girt up, every

nerve strained, the whole attention directed towards spiritual victory, arrangements made to facilitate communion with God, new methods devised for subordinating all our work to the one great aim, everything gone about as if now at last we had found the secret of living; and then in a surprisingly short time all this eagerness cools down, doubt takes the place of decision, discouragement and failure breed distrust of our methods, and we lapse into contentment with easier attainments and more worldly aims. And at length, after many false starts, we are ashamed to begin any arduous spiritual task for fear of ceasing it next week. We think that the surest way to make fools of ourselves is to adopt a thorough-going Christian practice, so much do we count upon ourselves flagging, wearying, altering our course. How many times have we been rekindled to some true zeal, how often have we gathered up our scattered energies and concentrated our efforts on the Christian life, and yet as often have we gone back to a dreamy, listless sauntering, as if we had nothing to secure, no end to reach, no work to accomplish.

Are we likely ever to reach the goal thus? Will the goal come to us, or how are we ever to reach it? Are we nearer to it to-day than ever before? Are not our minds yet made up that it is worth reaching, and that whatever does not help us towards it must be abandoned? Let us be clear in our own minds as to the matters which tempt us aside from the straight path to the goal and are incompatible with progress; and let us determine whether these things are to prevail with us or not.

3. Be in earnest. "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air," not as one amusing himself with idle

flourishes, but as one who has a real enemy to encounter. What a blush does this raise on the cheek of every Christian who knows himself! How much of this mere parade and sham-fighting is there in the Christian army! We learn the art of war and the use of our weapons as if we were forthwith to use them in the field; we act over and learn many varieties of offensive and defensive movements, and know the rules by which spiritual foes may be subdued; we read books which direct us about personal religion, and delight in those which most skilfully lay open our weaknesses and show us how we may overcome them. But all this is mere fencing-school work; it kills no enemy. It is but a species of accomplishment like that of those who learn the use of the sword, not because they mean to use it in battle, but that they may have a more elegant carriage. A great part of our spiritual strength is spent in mere parade. It is not meant to have any serious effect. It is not directed against anything in particular. We seem to be doing everything that a good soldier of Jesus Christ need do save the one thing: we slay no enemy. We leave no foe stone-dead on the field. We are well trained: no one can deny it; we could instruct others how to conquer sin; we spend much time, and thought, and feeling on exercises which are calculated to make an impression on sin; and yet is it not almost entirely a beating the air? Where are our slain foes? This apparent eagerness to be holy, this professed devotedness to the cause of Christ—are they not mere flourish? We do not mean to strike our enemies; we for the most part only wish to make ourselves believe we are striking them and are zealous and faithful soldiers of Christ.

Even where there is some reality in the contest we

may still be beating the air. We may be able to say that we have apprehended the reality of the moral warfare to which every man is called in this life. We may be able honestly to say that if our sins are not slain, it is neither because we have not recognised them, nor because we have aimed no blows at them. We have made serious and honest efforts to destroy sin, and yet our blows seem to fall short; and sin stands before us vigorous and lively, and as ready as ever to give us a fall. Many persons who level blows at their sins do not after all strike them. Spiritual energy is put forth; but it is not brought fully, fairly, and firmly into contact with the sin to be destroyed. In most Christian people there is a great expenditure of thought and of feeling about sin; their spirit is probably more exercised about their sins than about anything else: and a great deal of spiritual life is expended in the shape of shame, compunction, penitence, resolve, self-restraint, watchfulness, prayer. All this, were it brought directly to bear on some definite object, would produce great effect; but in many cases no good whatever seems to result.

Paul's language suggests that possibly the reason may be that there remains in the heart some reluctance quite to kill and put an end to sin, to beat all the life out of it. It is like a father fighting with his son: he wishes to defend himself and disarm his son, but not to kill him. We may be willing or even intensely anxious to escape the blows sin aims at us; we may be desirous to wound, hamper, and limit our sin, and keep it under control; we may wish to tame the wild animal and domesticate it, so as to make it yield some pleasure and profit, and yet be reluctant to slay it outright. The soul and life of every sin is some lust

of our own; and while quite anxious to put an end to some of the evils this lust produces in our life, we may not be prepared to extinguish the lust itself. We pray God, for example, to preserve us from the evils of praise or of success; and yet we continue to court praise and success. We are unable to sacrifice the pleasure for the sake of the safety. Therefore our warfare against sin becomes unreal. Our blows are not delivered home, but beat the air. Unconsciously we cherish the evil desire within us which is the soul of the sin, and seek to destroy only some of its manifestations.

The result of such unreal contest is detrimental. Sin is like something floating in the air or the water: the very effort we make to grasp and crush it displaces it, and it floats mockingly before us untouched. Or it is like an agile antagonist who springs back from our blow, so that the force we have expended merely racks and strains our own sinews and does him no injury. So when we spend much effort in conquering sin and find it as lively as ever, the spirit is strained and hurt by putting out force on nothing. It is less able than before to resist sin, less believing, less hopeful, inwardly ill at ease and distracted. It becomes confused and disheartened, disbelieves in itself, and scoffs at fresh resolves and endeavours.

Finally, Paul tells us what that enemy was against which he directed his well-aimed, firmly planted blows. It was his own body. Every man's body is his enemy when, instead of being his servant, it becomes his master. The proper function of the body is to serve the will, to bring the inner man into contact with the outer world and enable him to influence it. When the body mutinies and refuses to obey the will, when it

usurps authority and compels the man to do its bidding, it becomes his most dangerous enemy. When Paul's body presumed to dictate to his spirit, and demanded comforts and indulgences, and shrank from hardship, he beat it down. The word he uses is an exceptionally strong one: "I keep under;" it is a technical term of the games, and means to strike full in the face. It was the word used of the most damaging blow one boxer could give another. This unmerciful, overpowering blow Paul dealt to his body, resisting its assaults and making it helpless to tempt him. He thus brought it into subjection, made it his slave, as the winner in some of the games had a right to carry the vanquished into slavery.

It was probably by sheer strength of will and by the grace of Christ that Paul subdued his body. Many in all ages have striven to subdue it by fasting, by scourging, by wakefulness; and of these practices we have no right to speak scornfully until we can say that by other means we have reduced the body to its proper position as the servant of the spirit. Can we say that our body is brought into subjection; that it dare not curtail our devotions on the plea of weariness; that it dare not demand a dispensation from duty on the score of some slight bodily disturbance; that it never persuades us to neglect any duty on the score of its unpleasantness to the flesh; that it never prompts us to undue anxiety either about what we shall eat or drink or wherewithal we shall be clothed; that it never quite treads the spirit under foot and defiles it with wicked imaginings? There is a fair and reasonable degree in which a man may and ought to cherish his own flesh, but there is also needful a disregard to many of its claims and a hard-hearted obduracy to its complaints. In an age when

Spartan simplicity of life is almost unknown, it is very easy to sow to the flesh almost without knowing it until we find ourselves reaping corruption.

Probably nothing more effectually slackens our efforts in the spiritual life than the sense of unreality which haunts us as we deal with God and the unseen. With the boxer in the games it was grim earnest. He did not need any one to tell him that his life depended on his ability to defend himself against his trained antagonist. Every faculty must be on the alert. No dreamer has here a chance. What we need is something of the same sense of reality, that it is a life-and-death contest we are engaged in, and that he that treats sin as a weak or pretended antagonist will shortly be dragged a mangled disgrace out of the arena.

FALLACIOUS PRESUMPTIONS.

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three-and-twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?"—1 Cor. x. 1-22.

XV.

FALLACIOUS PRESUMPTIONS.

IN discussing the question regarding "things offered unto idols," Paul is led to treat at large of Christian liberty, a subject to which he was always drawn. And partly to encourage the Christians of Corinth to consider their weak and prejudiced brethren, partly for other reasons, he reminds them how he himself abridged his liberty and departed from his just claims in order that the Gospel he preached might find readier acceptance. Besides, not only for the sake of the Gospel and of other men, but for his own sake also, he must practise self-denial. It would profit him nothing to have been an apostle unless he practised what he preached. He had felt that in considering the spiritual condition of other men and trying to advance it he was apt to forget his own; and he saw that all men were more or less liable to the same temptation, and were apt to rest in the fact that they were Christians and to shrink from the arduous life which gives that name its meaning. By means of two illustrations Paul fixes this idea in their minds, first pointing them to their own games, in which they saw that not all who entered for the race obtained the prize, and then pointing them to the history of Israel, in which they might plainly read that not all who began the journey to the promised land found entrance into it.

The Israelites of the Exodus are here introduced as exemplifying a common experience. They accepted the position of God's people, but failed in its duties. They perceived the advantages of being God's subjects, but shrank from much which this implied. They were willing to be delivered from bondage, but found themselves overweighted by the responsibilities and risks of a free life. They were in contact with the highest advantages men need possess, and yet failed to use them.

The amount of conviction which prompts us to form a connection with Christ may be insufficient to stimulate us to do and endure all that results from that connection. The children of Israel were all baptized unto Moses, but they did not implement their baptism by a persistent and faithful adherence to him. They were baptized unto Moses by their acceptance of his leadership in the Exodus. By passing through the Red Sea at his command they definitely renounced Pharaoh and abandoned their old life, and as definitely pledged and committed themselves to throw in their lot with Moses. By passing the Egyptian frontier and following the guidance of the pillar of cloud they professed their willingness to exchange a life of bondage, with its security and occasional luxuries, for a life of freedom, with its hazards and hardships; and by that passage of the Red Sea they were as certainly sworn to support and obey Moses as ever was Roman soldier who took the oath to serve his emperor. When, at Brederode's invitation, the patriots of Holland put on the beggar's wallet and tasted wine from the beggar's bowl, they were baptized unto William of Orange and their country's cause. When the sailors on board the *Swan* weighed anchor and beat out of Plymouth, they

were baptized unto Drake and pledged to follow him and fight for him to the death. Baptism means much; but if it means anything, it means that we commit and pledge ourselves to the life we are called to by Him in whose name we are baptized. It draws a line across the life, and proclaims that to whomsoever in time past we have been bound, and for whatsoever we have lived, we now are pledged to this new Lord, and are to live in His service. Such a pledge was given by every Israelite who turned his back on Egypt and passed through that sea which was the defence of Israel and destruction to the enemy. The crossing was at once actual deliverance from the old life and irrevocable committal to the new. They died to Pharaoh, and were born again to Moses. They were baptized unto Moses.

And as the Israelites had thus a baptism analogous to the one Christian sacrament, so had they a spiritual food and drink in the wilderness which formed a sacrament analogous to the Christian communion. They were not shut out of Egypt, and imprisoned in the desert, and left to do the best they could on their own resources. If they failed to march steadily forward and fulfil their destiny as the emancipated people of God, this failure was not due to any neglect on God's part. The fare might be somewhat Spartan, but a sufficiency was always provided. He who had encouraged them to enter on this new life was prepared to uphold them in it and carry them through.

One of the expressions used by Paul in describing the sustenance of the Israelites has given rise to some discussion. "They did all drink," he says, "the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ."

Now there happened to be a Jewish tradition which gave out that the rock smitten by Moses was a detached block or boulder, "globular, like a beehive," which rolled after the camp in its line of march, and was always at hand, with its unfailing water-supply. This is altogether too grotesque an idea. The fact is that the Israelites did not die of thirst in the wilderness. It was quite likely they should; and but for the providential supply of water, so large a company could not have been sustained. And no doubt not only in the rock at Rephidim at the beginning of their journey and the rock of Kadesh at its close, but in many most unlikely places during the intervening years, water was found. So that in looking back on the entire journey it might very naturally be said that the rock had followed them, not meaning that wherever they went they had the same source to draw from, but that throughout their journeyings they were supplied with water in places and ways as unexpected and unlikely.

Paul's point is that in the wilderness the food and drink of the Israelites were "spiritual," or, as we should more naturally say, sacramental; that is to say, their sustenance continually spoke to them of God's nearness and reminded them that they were His people. And as Christ Himself, when He lifted the bread at the Last Supper, said, "This is My body," so does Paul use analogous language and say, "That Rock was Christ," an expression which gives us considerable insight into the significance of the Israelitish types of Christ, and helps to rid our minds of some erroneous impressions we are apt to cherish regarding them.

The manna and the water from the rock were given

to sustain the Israelites and carry them towards their promised land, but they were so given as to quicken faith in God. To every Israelite his daily nourishment might reasonably be called spiritual, because it reminded him that God was with him in the wilderness, and prompted him to think of that purpose and destiny for the sake of which God was sustaining the people. To the devout among them their daily food became a means of grace, deepening their faith in the unseen God and rooting their life in a true dependence upon Him. The manna and the water from the rock were sacramental, because they were continuous signs and seals of God's favour and redeeming efficiency and promise. They were types of Christ, serving for Israel in the wilderness the purpose which Christ serves for us, enabling them to believe in a heavenly Father who cared for them and accomplishing the same spiritual union with the unseen God which Christ accomplishes for us.

It was in this sense that Paul could say that the rock was Christ. The Israelites in the wilderness did not know that the rock was a type of Christ. They did not, as they drank of the water, think of One who was to come and satisfy the whole thirst of men. The types of Christ in the old times did not enable men to forecast the future; it was not through the future they exercised an influence for good on the mind. They worked by exciting there and then in the Jewish mind the same faith in God which Christ excites in our mind. It was not knowledge that saved the Jew, but faith, attachment to the living God. It was not the fragmentary and disjointed picture of a Redeemer thrown on the screen of his hopes by the types, nor was it any

thought of a future Deliverer, which saved him, but his belief in God as his Redeemer there and then. This belief was quickened by the various institutions, providences, and objects by which God convinced the Jews that He was their Friend and Lord. Sacrifice they accepted as an institution of God's appointment intended to encourage them to believe in the forgiveness of sin and in God's favour; and without any thought of the realized ideal of sacrifice in Christ, the believing and devout Israelite entered through sacrifice into fellowship with God. Every sacrifice was a type of Christ; it did foreshadow that which was to be: but it was a type, not because it revealed Christ to those who saw or offered it, but because for the time being it served the same purpose as Christ now serves, enabling men to believe in the forgiveness of sins.

But while in the mind of the Israelite there was no connection of the type with the Christ that was to come, there was in reality a connection between them. The redemption of men is one whether accomplished in the days of the Exodus or in our own time. The idea or plan of salvation is one, resting always on the same reasons and principles. The Israelites were pardoned in view of the incarnation and atonement of Christ just as we are. If it was needful for our salvation that Christ should come and live and suffer in human nature, it was also needful for their salvation. The Lamb was slain "from the foundation of the world," and the virtue of the sacrifice of Calvary was efficacious for those who lived before as well as for those who lived after it. To the mind of God it was present, and in His purpose it was determined, from the beginning; and it is in view of Christ's incarnation and work that sinners early or late have been restored to God. So

that everything by which God instructed men and taught them to believe in His mercy and holiness was connected with Christ. It was to Christ it owed its existence, and really it was a shadow of the coming substance. And as the shadow is named from the substance, it may truly be said, "That Rock was Christ."

These outward blessings then of which St. Paul here speaks had very much the same nature as the Christian sacraments to which he tacitly compares them. They were intended to convey greater gifts and be the channels of a grace more valuable than themselves. But to most of the Israelites they remained mere manna and water, and brought no firmer assurance of God's presence, no more fruitful acceptance of God's purpose. The majority took the husk and threw away the kernel; were so delayed by the wrappings that they forgot to examine the gift they enclosed; accepted the physical nourishment, but rejected the spiritual strength it contained. Instead of learning from their wilderness experience the sufficiency of Jehovah and gathering courage to fulfil His purpose with them, they began to murmur and lust after evil things, and were destroyed by the destroyer. They had been baptized unto Moses, pledging themselves to his leadership and committing themselves to the new life he opened to them; they had been sustained by manna and water from the rock, which plainly told them that all nature would work for them if they pressed forward to their God-appointed destiny: but the most of them shrank from the hardships and hazards of the way, and could not lift their heart to the glory of being led by God and used to fulfil His greatest purposes.

And so, says Paul, it may be with you. It is possible that you may have been baptized and may have pro-

fessedly committed yourself to the Christian career, it is possible you may have partaken of that bread and wine which convey undying life and energy to believing recipients, and may yet have failed to use these as spiritual food, enabling you to fulfil all the duties of the life you are pledged to. Had it been enough merely to show a readiness to enter on the more arduous life, then all Israel would have been saved, for "all" without exception passed through the Red Sea and committed themselves to life under God's leadership. Had it been enough outwardly to participate in that which actually links men to God, then all Israel would have been inspired by God's Spirit and strength, for "all" without exception partook of the spiritual food and the spiritual drink. But the disastrous and undeniable result was that the great mass of the people were overthrown in the wilderness and did never set foot in the land of promise. And men have not yet outlived this same danger of committing themselves to a life they find too hard and full of risk. They see the advantages of a Christian career, and connect themselves with the Christian Church; they instinctively perceive that it is there God is most fully known, and that the purposes of God are there concentrated and running on to direct and perfect results; they are drawn by their better self to throw in their lot with the Church, to forget competing advantages, and spend themselves wholly on what is best: and yet the difficulty of standing alone and acting on individual conviction rather than on current understandings, the wearing depression of personal failure and insufficiency for high and spiritual attainment, the distraction of the haunting doubt that after all they are making sacrifices and suffering privations which are fruitless, unwise, unnecessary,

gradually betray the spirit into virtual renunciation of all Christian hopes and into a practical willingness to return to the old life. And thus as the wilderness came to be spotted all over with the burial-places of those who had left the Red Sea behind them with shouts of triumph and with hopes that broke out in song and dancing, as the route of that once jubilant host might at last have been traced, as the great slave-routes of Africa are traceable, by the bones of men and the skeletons of children, so, alas! might the Church's march through the centuries be recognised by the far more horrifying remains of those who once, with liveliest hope and unbroken sense of security, joined themselves to the people of Christ, but silently lost hold of the hope that once drew them on and either stole away on private enterprises of their own and were destroyed of the destroyer, or withered in helpless imbecility, murmuring at their lot and stone-blind to its glory. As the retreat of Napoleon's "grand army" from Moscow was marked by corpses wearing the French uniform, but bringing neither strength nor lustre to their cause, so must shame be reflected on the Church by the countless numbers of those who can be identified with Christ's cause only by the uniform they wear, and not by any victories they have won. There were in the wilderness districts through which no Israelite would willingly pass, districts in which many thousands had fallen, and which were branded as vast "graves of lust," places whose very name stirred a deeper horror and raised a quicker blush on the Israelite's cheek than is raised on the Englishman's by the mention of Majuba Hill or Braddon's defeat. And the Church's territory also is spotted with those vast charnel-houses and places of defeat where even her mighty have fallen,

where the earth refuses to cover the disgrace and blot out the stain. These are not things of the past. While women and children are starved though they toil all day and half the night, with eagerest energy and the skill necessity gives; while life is to so many thousands in our land a joyless and hopeless misery; while trade not only panders to covetousness and selfishness, but directly contributes to what is immoral and destructive, we can scarcely speak of the "glorious marching" of the Church of Christ. We have our places of horror, which no right-hearted Christian can think of without a shudder.

But while the distinction between the life we naturally seek and that to which God calls us is felt by all from age to age, the forms in which this distinction makes itself felt vary as the world grows older. To all men living in a world of sense it is difficult to live by faith in the unseen. To every man it is the ultimate, severest test of character to determine for what ends he will live and to carry out this determination; but the temptations which avail to draw men aside from their reasonable decision are various as the men themselves. Paul names the temptations to which the Corinthians, in common with the Israelites, were exposed: idolatry, fornication, murmuring, tempting Christ. He saw clearly how difficult it was for the Corinthians to discard all heathen customs, how much of what had been brightest in their life they must sacrifice if they were to renounce absolutely the religion of their parents and friends and all the joyous, if licentious, customs associated with that religion. Apparently some of them thought they might pass from the Christian communion to the heathen temple, and after partaking of Christ's sacrament eat and

drink in the idolatrous festival, entering into the entire service. They seemed to think that they might be both Christians and pagans.

Against this vain attempt to combine the incompatible Paul warns them. Do not tempt Christ, he says, by experimenting how far He will bear with your conformity to idolatry. Some of the Israelites did so, and were destroyed by serpents. Do not murmur that you are hereby severed from all the enjoyments of life, dissociated from your heathen friends, blackballed in society and in business, excluded from all national festivals and from many private entertainments; do not count up your losses, but your gains. Your temptations are severe, but "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." Every man must make up his mind to a certain kind of life and go through with it. No man can unite in his own life all advantages. He must deliberate and choose; and having made his choice, he must not lament what he loses or be tempted from striving to gain what he judges best by weakly and greedily craving for the second-best also. He may win the first prize; he may win the second: he cannot win both, and if he tries, he will win neither.

The practical outcome of all that Paul has thus rapidly passed in review he utters in the haunting words, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." In this life we are never beyond the reach of temptation. And these temptations to which all of us are exposed are real; they do sufficiently test character and show what it actually is. Our suppositions regarding ourselves are often untrue. There is no reality corresponding. Our state is actually not such as we conceive it to be. We are at ease and

complacent when we ought not to be at ease. We think we stand secure when we are on the point of falling. We live as if we had reached the goal when the whole journey is yet before us. Our future may be very different from what we wish or expect. Mere satisfaction with our present condition is a very insecure foundation on which to build our hope for the future. Mere reliance on a profession we have made, or on the fact that we are within reach of means of grace, tends only to slacken our energies. Heedlessness, taking things for granted, failure to sift matters thoroughly out, an indolent unwillingness to probe our spiritual condition to the quick—this is what has betrayed multitudes of Christians. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

If determined wickedness has slain its thousands, heedlessness has slain its tens of thousands. Through lack of watchfulness men fall into sin which entangles them for life and thwarts their best purposes. Through want of watchfulness men go on in sin which exceedingly provokes God, till at last His hand falls heavily upon them. Every man is apt to lay too much stress on the circumstance that he has joined himself to the number of those who own the leadership of Christ. The question remains, How far has he gone with his Leader? Many an Israelite compassionated the poor heathen whom he left behind in the land of Egypt, and yet found that, with all his own apparent nearness to God, his heart was heathen still. Whoever takes it for granted that things are well with him, whoever "thinketh he standeth"—he is the man who has especial and urgent need to "take heed lest he fall."

THE VEIL.

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God."—1 Cor. xi. 1–16.

XVI.

THE VEIL.

AT this point of the Epistle Paul passes from the topics regarding which the Corinthians had requested him to inform them, to make some remarks on the manner in which, as he had heard, they were conducting their meetings for public worship. The next four chapters are occupied with instructions as to what constitutes seemliness and propriety in such meetings. He desires to express in general his satisfaction that on the whole they had adhered to the instructions he had already given them and the arrangements he had himself made while in Corinth. "I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." Yet there are one or two matters which cannot be spoken of in terms of commendation. He heard, in the first place, with surprise and vexation, that not only were women presuming to pray in public and address the assembled Christians, but even laid aside while they did so the characteristic dress of their sex, and spoke, to the scandal of all sober-minded Orientals and Greeks, unveiled. To reform this abuse he at once addresses himself. It is a singular specimen of the strange matters that must have come before Paul for decision when the care of all the Churches lay upon him. And

his settlement of it is an admirable illustration of his manner of resolving all practical difficulties by means of principles which are as true and as useful for us to-day as they were for those primitive Christians who had heard his own voice admonishing them. In treating ethical or practical subjects, Paul is never superficial, never content with a mere rule.

In order to see the import and importance of this matter of dress, we must first of all know how it came to pass that the Christian women should have thought of making a demonstration so unfeminine as to shock the very heathen around them. What was their intention or meaning in doing so? What idea was possessing their minds? Throughout this long and interesting letter, Paul is doing little else than endeavouring to correct the hasty impressions which these new believers were receiving regarding their position as Christians. A great flood of new and vast ideas was suddenly poured in upon their minds; they were taught to look differently on themselves, differently on their neighbours, differently on God, differently on all things. Old things had in their case passed away with a will, and all things had become new. They were made alive from the dead, they were born again, and did not know how far this affected the relationships with this world into which their natural birth had brought them. The facts of the second birth and the new life took such hold upon them, that they could not for a time understand how they were yet connected with the old life. So that for some of them Paul had to solve the simplest problems, as, for example, we find that the believing husband was in doubt whether he should live with his wife who remained an unbeliever, for was it not abhorrent to nature that he, the living, should be bound to

the dead, that a child of God should remain in the most intimate connection with one who was yet a child of wrath? Was this not a monstrous anomaly, for which prompt divorce was the fit remedy? That such questions as these should be put shows us how difficult these early Christians found it to adjust themselves as children of God to their position in a corrupt, condemned world.

Now one of the ideas in Christianity which was newest to them was the equality of all before God, an idea well calculated to take powerful and absorbing hold of a world half slaves, half masters. The emperor and the slave must equally give account to God. Cæsar is not above responsibility; the barbarian who swells his triumph and is afterwards slaughtered in his dungeon or his theatre is not beneath it. Each man and each woman must stand alone before God, and for himself and herself give account of the life received from God. Alongside of this idea came that of the one Saviour for all alike, the common salvation accessible to all on equal terms, and partaking of which all became brethren and on a level, one with Christ and one therefore with each other. There was neither Greek nor barbarian, male nor female, bond nor free, now. These three mighty distinctions that had tyrannized over the ancient world were abolished, for all were one in Christ Jesus. It dawned on the barbarian that though there was no Roman citizenship for him nor any entrance into the mighty commonwealth of Greek literature, he had a citizenship in heaven, was the heir of God, and could command even with his barbaric speech the ear of the Most High. It dawned on the slave as his fetter galled him, or as his soul sank under the sad hopelessness of his life, that he was God's redeemed, rescued

from the bondage of his own evil heart, and superior to all curse, being God's friend. And it dawned on the woman that she was neither man's toy nor man's slave, a mere luxury or appendage to his establishment, but that she also had herself a soul, a responsibility equally momentous with the man's, and therefore a life to frame for herself. The astonishment with which such ideas must have been received, so subversive of the principles on which heathen society was proceeding, it is impossible now to realize; but we cannot wonder that they should by their fresh power and absorbing novelty have carried the Christians to quite the opposite extremes from those at which they had been living.

In the case before us the women who had been awakened to a sense of their own personal, individual responsibility and their equal right to the highest privileges of men began to think that in all things they should be recognised as the equals of the other sex. They were one with Christ; men could have no higher honour: was it not obvious that they were on an equality with those who had held them so cheap? They had the Holy Ghost dwelling in them; might not they, as well as the men, edify Christian assemblies by uttering the inspirations of the Spirit? They were not dependent on men for their Christian privileges; ought not they to show this by laying aside the veil, which was the acknowledged badge of dependence? This laying aside of the veil was not a mere change of fashion in dress, of which, of course, Paul would have had nothing to say; it was not a feminine device for showing themselves to better advantage among their fellow-worshippers; it was not even, though this also, alas! falls within the range of possible supposition, the

immodest boldness and forwardness which are sometimes seen to accompany in both sexes the profession of Christianity; but it was the outward expression and easily read symbol of a great movement on the part of women in assertion of their rights and independence.

The exact meaning of the laying aside of the veil thus becomes plain. It was the part of female attire which could most readily be made the symbol of a change in the views of women regarding their own position. It was the most significant part of the woman's dress. Among the Greeks it was the universal custom for the women to appear in public with the head covered, commonly with the corner of their shawl drawn over their head like a hood. Accordingly Paul does not insist on the face being covered, as in Eastern countries, but only the head. This covering of the head could be dispensed with only in places where they were secluded from public view. It was therefore the recognised badge of seclusion; it was the badge which proclaimed that she who wore it was a private, not a public, person, finding her duties at home, not abroad, in one household, not in the city. And a woman's whole life and duties ought to lie so much apart from the public eye, that both sexes looked upon the veil as the truest and most treasured emblem of woman's position. In this seclusion there was of course implied a limitation of woman's sphere of action and a subordination to one man's interests instead of to the public. It was the man's place to serve the State or the public, the woman's place to serve the man. And so thoroughly was it recognised that the veil was a badge setting forth this private and subordinate position of the woman, that it was the one significant rite in marriage that she assumed the veil in token that now her husband was

her head, to whom she was prepared to hold herself subordinate. The laying aside the veil was therefore an expression on the part of the Christian women that their being assumed as members of Christ's body raised them out of this position of dependence and subordination.

This movement of the Corinthian women towards independence, on the ground that all are one in Christ Jesus, Paul meets by reminding them that personal equality is perfectly consistent with social subordination. It was quite true, as Paul himself had taught them, that, so far as their connection with Christ went, there was no distinction of sex. To the woman, as to the man, the offer of salvation was made directly. It was not through her father or her husband that the woman had to deal with Christ. She came into contact with the living God and united herself to Christ independently of any male representative and on the same footing as her male relatives. There is but one Christ for all, rich and poor, high and low, male and female; and all are received by Him on the same footing, no distinction being made. While then in things civil and social the husband represents the wife, he cannot do so in matters of religion. Here each person must act for himself or herself. And the woman must not confound these two spheres in which she moves, or argue that because she is independent of her husband in the greater, she must also be independent of him in the less. Equality in the one sphere is not inconsistent with subordination in the other. "I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

The principle enounced in these words is of incalculable importance and very wide and constant application.

Whatever is meant by the natural equality of men, it cannot mean that all are to be in every respect on the same level, and that none are to have authority over others. The application of Paul's principle to the matter in hand alone here concerns us. The woman must recognise that as Christ, though equal with the Father, is subordinate to Him, so is she herself subordinate to her husband or her father. In her private worship she deals with Christ independently; but when she appears in public and social worship, she appears as a woman with certain social relations. Her relation to Christ does not dissolve her relations to society. Rather does it intensify them. The inward change that has passed upon her and the new relation which she has formed independently of her husband only strengthen the bond by which she is tied to him. When a boy becomes a Christian, that confirms, and in no degree relaxes, his subordination to his parents. He holds a relation to Christ which they could not form for him, and which they cannot dissolve; but this independence in one matter does not make him independent in everything. A commissioned officer in the army holds his commission from the Crown; but this does not interfere with, but only confirms, his subordination to officers who, like himself, are servants of the Crown, but above him in rank. In order to the harmony of society, there is a gradation of ranks; and social grievances result, not from the existence of social distinctions, but from their abuse.

This gradation then involves Paul's inference that "every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head." The veil being the recognised

badge of subordination, when a man appears veiled he would seem to acknowledge some one present and visible as his head, and would thus dishonour Christ, his true Head. A woman, on the other hand, appearing unveiled would seem to say that she acknowledges no visible human head, and thereby dishonours her head—that is, her husband—and so doing, dishonours herself. For a woman to appear unveiled on the streets of Corinth was to proclaim her shame. And so, says Paul, a woman who in public worship discards her veil might as well be shaven. She puts herself on the level of the woman with a shaven head, which both among Jews and Greeks was a brand of disgrace. In the eye of the angels, who, according to the Jewish belief, were present in meetings for worship, the woman is disgraced who does not appear with "power on her head;" that is to say, with the veil by which she silently acknowledges the authority of her husband.

This subordination of the woman to the man belongs not merely to the order of the Christian Church, but has its roots in nature. "Man is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man." Paul's idea is that man was created to represent God and so to glorify Him, to be a visible embodiment of the goodness, and wisdom, and power of the unseen God. Nowhere so clearly or fully as in man can God be seen. Man is the glory of God because he is His image and is fitted to exhibit in actual life the excellencies which make God worthy of our love and worship. Looking at man as he actually and broadly is, we may think it a bold saying of Paul when he says, "Man is the glory of God;" and yet on consideration we see that this is no more than the truth. We should not scruple to say of the Man Christ Jesus that

He is the glory of God, that in the whole universe of God nothing can more fully reveal the infinite Divine goodness. In Him we see how truly man is God's image, and how fit a medium human nature is for expressing the Divine. We know of nothing higher than what Christ said, did, and was during the few months He went about among men. He is the glory of God; and every man in his degree, and according to his fidelity to Christ, is also the glory of God.

This is of course true of woman as well as of man. It is true that woman can exhibit the nature of God and be His glory as well as man. But Paul is placing himself at the point of view of the writer of Genesis and speaking broadly of God's purpose in creation. And he means that God's purpose was to express Himself fully and crown all His works by bringing into being a creature made in His image, able to subdue, and rule, and develop all that is in the world. This creature was man, a masculine, resolved, capable creature. And just as it appeals to our sense of fitness that when God became incarnate He should appear as man, and not as woman, so does it appeal to our sense of fitness that it is man, and not woman, who should be thought of as created to be God's representative on earth. But while man directly, woman indirectly, fulfils this purpose of God. She is God's glory by being man's glory. She serves God by serving man. She exhibits God's excellencies by creating and cherishing excellence in man. Without woman man cannot accomplish aught. The woman is created for the man, because without her he is helpless. "For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman."

But as man becomes actually the glory of God when

he perfectly subordinates himself to God with the absolute devotedness of love, so does woman become the glory of man when she upholds and serves man with that perfect devotedness of which woman so constantly shows herself to be capable. It is in winning the self-sacrificing love of man and his entire devotion that God's glory appears, and man's glory appears in his power to kindle and maintain the devotion of woman. Not in independence of God does man find either his own glory or God's, and not in independence of man does woman find either her own glory or man's. The desire of woman shall be to her husband; in the honourable devotedness to man which love prompts, woman fulfils the law of her creation; and it is only the imperfect and ignoble woman who has any sense of humiliation, degradation, or limitation of her sphere in following the lead of love for the individual. It is through this honourable service of man she serves God and fulfils the purpose of her existence. The woman who is most womanly will most readily recognise that her function is to be the glory of man, to mould, and elevate, and sustain the individual, to find her joy and her life in the private life, in which the affections are developed, principles formed, and all personal wants provided for. And man, on his part, must say,

> "If aught of goodness or of grace
> Be mine, hers be the glory."

For, as a French writer says, "her influence embraces the whole of life. A wife, a mother—two magical words, comprising the sweetest sources of man's felicity! Theirs is the reign of beauty, of love, of reason, always a reign. A man takes counsel with his wife; he obeys his mother: he obeys her long after she has ceased to live, and the ideas he has received

from her become principles even stronger than his passions."[1]

The position assigned to woman as the glory of man is therefore far removed from the view which cynically proclaims her man's mere convenience, whose function it is "to fatten household sinners," "to suckle fools and chronicle small beer." Paul's view, though adopted and exhibited in individual instances, is far as yet from commanding universal consent. But certainly nothing so distinguishes, elevates, purifies, and balances a man in life as a high esteem for woman. A man shows his manliness chiefly by a true reverence for all women, by a clear recognition of the high service appointed to them by God, and by a tender sympathy with them in all the various endurance their nature and their position demand.

That this is woman's normal sphere is indicated even by her unalterable physical characteristics. "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." By nature woman is endowed with a symbol of modesty and retirement. The veil, which signifies her devotement to home duties, is merely the artificial continuation of her natural gift of hair. The long hair of the Greek fop or of the English cavalier was accepted by the people as an indication of effeminate and luxurious living. Suitable for women, it is unsuitable for men; such is the instinctive judgment. And nature, speaking through this visible sign of the woman's hair, tells her that her place is in private, not in public, in the home, not in

[1] See Landels' *True Glory of Woman*.

the city or the camp, in the attitude of free and loving subordination, not in the seat of authority and rule. In other respects also the physical constitution of woman points to a similar conclusion. Her shorter stature and slighter frame, her higher pitch of voice, her more graceful form and movement, indicate that she is intended for the gentler ministries of home life rather than for the rough work of the world. And similar indications are found in her mental peculiarities. She has the gifts which fit her for influencing individuals; man has those qualities which enable him to deal with things, with abstract thought, or with persons in the mass. Quicker in perception and trusting more to her intuitions, woman sees at a glance what man is sure of only after a process of reasoning.

These arguments and conclusions introduced by Paul of course apply only to the broad and normal distinction between man and woman. He does not argue that women are inferior to men, nor that they may not have equal spiritual endowments; but he maintains that, whatever be their endowments, there is a womanly mode of exercising them and a sphere for woman which she ought not to transgress. Not all women are of the distinctively womanly type. A Britomarte may arm herself and overthrow the strongest knights. A Joan of Arc may infuse into a nation her own warlike and patriotic ardour. In art, in literature, in science, feminine names may occupy some of the highest places. In our own day many careers have been opened to women from which they had hitherto been debarred. They are now found in Government offices, in School Boards, in the medical profession. Again and again in the history of the Church attempts have been made to institute a female order

in the ministry, but as yet both the clerical and the legal professions are closed to women.[1] And we may reasonably conclude that as the army and navy will always be manned by the physically stronger sex, so there are other employments in which women would be entirely out of place.

But it will be asked, Why was Paul so exact in describing how a woman should comport herself while praying or prophesying in public, when he meant very shortly in this same Epistle to write, "Let your women keep silence in the Churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the Law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the Church"? It has been suggested that although it was the standing order that women should not speak, there might be occasions when the Spirit urged them to address an assemblage of Christians; and the regulation here given is intended for these exceptional cases. This may be so, but the connection in which the absolute prohibition is given rather militates against this view, and I think it more likely that in his own mind Paul held the two matters quite distinct and felt that a mere prohibition preventing women from addressing public meetings would not touch the more serious transgression of female modesty involved in the discarding of the veil. He could not pass over this violent assertion of independence without separate treatment; and while he is treating it, it is not the speaking in public which is before his mind, but the unfeminine assertion of

[1] The experience of the Society of Friends throws light on this matter.

independence and the principle underlying this manifestation.

Besides the direct teaching of this passage on the position of woman, there are inferences to be drawn from it of some importance. First, Paul recognises that the God of nature is the God of grace, and that we may safely argue from the one sphere to the other. "All things are of God." It is profitable to be recalled to the teaching of nature. It saves us from becoming fantastic in our beliefs, from cherishing fallacious expectations, from false, pharisaic, extravagant conduct.

Again, we are here reminded that every man and woman has to do directly with God, who has no respect of persons. Each soul is independent of all others in its relation to God. Each soul has the capacity of direct connection with God and of thus being raised above all oppression, not only of his fellows, but of all outward things. It is here man finds his true glory. His soul is his own to give it to God. He is dependent on nothing but on God only. Admitting God into his spirit, and believing in the love and rectitude of God, he is armed against all the ills of life, however little he may relish them. To all of us God offers Himself as Friend, Father, Saviour, Life. No man need remain in his sin; none need be content with a poor eternity; no man need go through life trembling or defeated: for God declares Himself on our side, and offers His love to all without respect of persons. We are all on the same footing before Him. God does not admit some freely, while He shrinks from the touch of others. It is as full and rich an inheritance that He puts within the reach of the poorest and most wretched of earth's inhabitants as He offers to him on whom the eyes of men rest in admiration or in envy.

To disbelieve or repudiate this privilege of uniting ourselves to God is in the truest sense to commit spiritual suicide. It is in God we live now; He is with us and in us: and to shut Him out from that inmost consciousness to which none else is admitted is to cut ourselves off, not only from the deepest joy and truest support, but from all in which we can find spiritual life.

Lastly, although there is in Christ an absolute levelling of distinctions, no one being more acceptable to God or nearer to Him because he belongs to a certain race or rank, or class, yet these distinctions remain and are valid in society. A woman is a woman still though she become a Christian; a subject must honour his king although by becoming a Christian he is himself in one aspect above all authority; a servant will show his Christianity, not by assuming an insolent familiarity with his Christian master, but by treating him with respectful fidelity. The Christian, above all men, needs sober-mindedness to hold the balance level and not allow his Christian rank entirely to outweigh his social position. It forms a great part of our duty to accept our own place without envying others and to do honour to those to whom honour is due.

ABUSE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the Church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come." — 1 Cor. xi. 17-34.

CHAPTER XVII.

ABUSE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

IN this paragraph of his letter Paul speaks of an abuse which can scarcely be credited, still less tolerated, in our times. The most sacred of all Christian ordinances had been allowed to degenerate into a bacchanalian revel, not easily to be distinguished from a Greek drinking party. A respectable citizen would hardly have permitted at his own table the licence and excess visible at the Table of the Lord. How such disorders in worship should have arisen calls for explanation.

It was common in Corinth and the other cities of Greece for various sections of the community to form themselves into associations, clubs, or guilds; and it was customary for such societies to share a common meal once a week, or once a month, or even when convenient daily. Some of these associations were formed of persons very variously provided with this world's goods, and one of the objects of some of the clubs was to make provision for the poorer members in such a manner as to subject them to none of the shame which is apt to attend the acceptance of promiscuous charity. All members had an equal right to present themselves at the table; and the property held by the society was equally distributed to all.

This custom, not unknown in Palestine itself, had been spontaneously adopted by the primitive Church of Jerusalem. The Christians of those early days felt themselves to be more closely related than the members of any trade guild or political club. If it was convenient and suitable that persons of similar political opinions or belonging to the same trade should to some extent have common property and should exhibit their community by sharing a common meal, it was certainly suitable among Christians. Speedily it became a prevalent custom for Christians to eat together. These meals were called *agapæ*—love-feasts—and became a marked feature of the early Church. On a fixed day, generally the first day of the week, the Christians assembled, each bringing what he could as a contribution to the feast: fish, poultry, joints of meat, cheese, milk, honey, fruit, wine, and bread. In some places the proceedings began by partaking of the consecrated bread and wine; but in other places physical appetite was first appeased by partaking of the meal provided, and after that the bread and wine were handed round.

This mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper was recommended by its close resemblance to its original celebration by the Lord and His disciples. It was at the close of the Paschal Supper, which was meant to satisfy hunger as well as to commemorate the Exodus, that our Lord took bread and brake it. He sat with His disciples as one family, and the meal they partook of was social as well as religious. But when the first solemnity passed away, and Christ's presence was no longer felt at the common table, the Christian love-feast was liable to many corruptions. The wealthy took the best seats, kept hold of their own delicacies, and, without waiting for any common distribution, each

looked after himself and went on with his own supper, regardless of the fact that others at the table had none. "Every one taketh before other his own supper," so that, while one is hungry and has received nothing, another at this so-called common love-feast has already taken too much and is intoxicated. Those who had no need to use the common stock, but had houses of their own to eat and to drink in, yet, for the sake of appearances, brought their contribution to the meal, but consumed it themselves. The consequence was that from being truly love-feasts, exhibiting Christian charity and Christian temperance, these meetings became scandalous as scenes of greedy selfishness, and profane conduct, and besotted excess. "What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." In this Paul anticipates the condemnation of these occasions of revelry and discord which the Church was obliged to pronounce after no great lapse of time.[1]

Thus then arose these disorders in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. By the conjunction of this rite with the social meal of the Christians it degenerated into an occasion of much that was unseemly and scandalous. To the reform of this abuse Paul now addresses himself; and it is worth our while to observe what remedies he does not propose as well as those he recommends.

First, He does not propose to disjoin absolutely and in all cases the religious rite from the ordinary meal. In the case of the richer members of the Church this disjunction is enjoined. They are directed to take their meals at home. "Have ye not houses to eat

[1] For a highly coloured description of the love-feasts see Renan's *St. Paul*, pp. 261-270.

and to drink in? or despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not? . . . If any man hunger, let him eat at home." But with the destitute or those who had no well-provided homes another rule must be adopted. It would shame the Christian community, and quite undo its quickly won reputation for brotherly love and charity, were its members observed begging their daily bread on the streets. It was equally unseemly for the rich to accept and for the poor to be denied the meal furnished at the expense of the Church. And therefore Paul's recommendation is that those who can conveniently eat at home should do so. But as no quality of the Christian Church is more strictly her own than charity and no duty more incumbent or more lovely than to feed the hungry, it could not dishonour the Church to spread in it a meal for whosoever should be in need of it.

Again, although the wine of Holy Communion had been so sadly abused, Paul does not prohibit its use in the ordinance. His moderation and wisdom have not in this respect been universally followed. On infinitely less occasion alterations have been introduced into the administration of the ordinance with a view to preventing its abuse by reclaimed drunkards, and on still slighter pretext a more sweeping alteration was introduced many centuries ago by the Church of Rome. In that Church the custom still prevails of receiving communion only under one kind; that is to say, the communicant partakes of the bread, but not of the wine. The reason for this is given by one of their most authoritative writers as follows: "It is well known that this custom was not first established by any ecclesiastical law; but, on the contrary, it was in consequence of the general prevalence of the usage that this law

was passed in approval of it. It is a matter of no less notoriety that the monasteries in whose centre this observance had its rise, and thence spread in ever wider circles, were led by a very nice sense of delicacy to impose on themselves this privation. A pious dread of desecrating, by spilling and the like, even in the most conscientious ministration, the form of the sublimest and the holiest whereof the participation can be vouchsafed to man, was the feeling which swayed their minds. . . . However, we should rejoice if it were left free to each one to drink or not out of the consecrated chalice ; and this permission would be granted if with the same love and concord a universal desire were expressed for the use of the cup as from the twelfth century the contrary wish has been enounced."[1] One cannot but regret that this reverence for the ordinance did not take the form of a humble acceptance of it, in accordance with its original institution ; and one cannot but think that the "pious dread of desecrating" the ordinance would have sufficiently prevented any spilling of the wine or other abuse, or have sufficiently atoned for any little accident which might occur. And certainly, in contrast to all such contrivances, the sanity of Paul's judgment comes out in strong relief; and we more clearly recognise the sagacity which directed that the ordinance should not be tampered with to suit the avoidable weaknesses of men, but that men should learn to live up to the requirements of the ordinance.

Again, Paul does not insist that because frequent communion had been abused this must give place to monthly or yearly communion. In after-times, partly from the abuses attending frequent communion and

[1] Möhler's *Symbolism*, i., 351.

partly from the condition of the cities into which Christianity found its way, a change to rarer celebration was found advisable; and, for reasons that need not here be detailed, the Church catholic, both in the East and in the West, settled down to the custom of celebrating the Lord's Supper weekly: and for some centuries it was expected that all members of the Church should partake weekly. Paul's reluctance to lay down any law on the subject suggests that the abuse of this or any other ordinance does not arise simply from the frequency of its administration. It is quite natural to suppose that the inevitable result of frequent communion is an undue familiarity with holy things and a profane carelessness in handling what should only be approached with the deepest reverence. That familiarity breeds contempt, or at any rate heedlessness, is certainly a rule that ordinarily holds good. As Nelson said of his sailors, hardened by familiarity with danger, they cared no more for round-shot than for peas. The medical student who faints or sickens at his first visit to the operating theatre soon looks with unblenching face on wounds and blood. And by the same law it is feared, and not without reason, that if we observed frequent communion, we should cease to cherish that proper awe, and cease to feel that flutter of hesitation, and cease to be subdued by that sacredness of the ordinance which yet are the very feelings through which in great measure the rite influences us for good. We think it would be impossible to pass every week through those trying moments in which the soul trembles before God's majesty and love as exhibited in the Lord's Supper; and we fear that the heart would instinctively shrink from the reality, and protect itself against the emotion, and find a way of

observing the ordinance with ease to itself, and that thus the life would die out from the celebration, and the mere husk or form be left.

It is, however, obvious that these fears need not be verified, and that an effort on our part would prevent the consequences dreaded. Our method of procedure in all such cases is first to find out what it is right to do, and then, though it cost us an effort, to do it. If our reverence for the ordinance in question depends on its rare celebration, every one must see that such reverence is very precarious. May it not be a merely superstitious or sentimental reverence? Is it not produced by some false idea of the rite and its signification, or does it not spring from the solemnity of the paraphernalia and human surroundings of it? Paul seeks to restore reverence in the Corinthians not by prohibiting frequent communion, but by setting more clearly before them the solemn facts which underlie the rite. In presence of these facts every worthy communicant is at all times living; and if it be merely the outward equipment and presentation of these facts which solemnize us and quicken our reverence, then this itself is rather an argument for a more frequent celebration of the rite, that so this false reverence at least might be dissipated.

The instincts of men are, however, in many cases a safer guide than their judgments; and there is a feeling prevalent that very frequent communion is not advisable, and that if it be advisable it should be reached not at a bound, but step by step. The main point on which the individual should insist on coming to some clear understanding with himself is whether his own reluctance to frequent communion does not arise from his fear of the ordinance being too profitable rather than

from any fear of its ceasing to profit. Does not our shrinking from it often mean that we shrink from being more distinctly confronted with the love and holiness of Christ and with His purpose in dying for us? Does it not mean that we are not quite reconciled to be always living on the holiest motives, always under the most subduing and purifying influences, always living as the children of God, whose citizenship is in heaven? Do we shrink from the additional restraint and the fresh and effectual summons to a life, not higher and purer than we ought to be living—for there is no such life—but higher and purer than we are quite prepared to live? Putting to ourselves these questions, we use this rite as the thermometer, which shows us whether we are cold, lukewarm, or hot, or as the lead heaved from time to time, which shows us the depth of water we have and the kind of bottom over which we are holding our course.

The two most instructive writers on the sacraments are Calvin and Waterland. The latter, in his very elaborate treatment of the Eucharist, offers some remarks upon the point before us. "There can," he says, "be no just bar to frequency of communion but the want of preparation, which is only such a bar as men may themselves remove if they please; and therefore it concerns them highly to take off the impediment as soon as possible, and not to trust to vain hopes of alleviating one fault by another. . . . The danger of misperforming any religious duty is an argument for fear and caution, but no excuse for neglect; God insists upon the doing it, and the doing it well also. . . . It was no sufficient plea for the slothful servant under the Gospel that he thought his master hard to please, and thereupon neglected his bounden duty, for the

use he ought to have made of that thought was to have been so much the more wakeful and diligent in his master's service. Therefore in the case of the Holy Communion it is to very little purpose to plead the strictness of the self-examination or preparation by way of excuse either for a total, or for a frequent, or for a long neglect of it. A man may say that he comes not to the Table because he is not prepared, and so far he assigns a good reason; but if he should be further asked why he is not prepared when he may, then he can only make some trifling, insufficient excuse or remain speechless."[1]

The positive counsel Paul gives regarding suitable preparation for participation in this Sacrament is very simple. He offers no elaborate scheme of self-examination which might fill the mind with scruples and induce introspective habits and spiritual hypochondria. He would have every man answer the plain question, Do you discern the Lord's body in the Sacrament? This is the one cardinal point on which all revolves, admitting or excluding each applicant. He who clearly understands that this is no common meal, but the outward symbol by means of which God offers to us Jesus Christ, is not likely to desecrate the Sacrament. "This is My body," says the Lord, meaning that this bread will ever remind the communicant that his Lord freely gave His own body for the life of the world. And whoever accepts the bread and the wine because they remind him of this and bring him into a renewed attitude of faith is a worthy communicant. The Corinthians were chastened by sickness and apparently by death that they might see and repent of the enormity

[1] Waterland, *Works*, iv., p. 781.

of using these symbols as common food; and in order that they might escape this chastening, they had but to recall the institution of the Sacrament by our Lord Himself.

The brief narrative of this first institution which Paul here inserts gives prominence to the truth that the Sacrament was intended primarily as a memorial or remembrance of the Saviour. Nothing could be simpler or more human than our Lord's appointment of this Sacrament. Lifting the material of the Supper before Him, He bids His disciples make the simple act of eating and drinking the occasion of remembering Him. As the friend who is setting out on a long absence or is passing for ever from earth puts into our hands his portrait or something he has used, or worn, or prized, and is pleased to think that we shall treasure it for his sake, so did Christ on the eve of His death secure this one thing: that His disciples should have a memento by which to remember Him. And as the dying gift of a friend becomes sacred to us as his own person, and we cannot bear to see it handed about by unsympathetic hands and remarked upon by those who have not the same loving reverence as ourselves, and as when we gaze at his portrait, or when we use the very pen or pencil worn smooth by his fingers, we recall the many happy times we spent together and the bright and inspiring words that fell from his lips, so does this Sacrament seem sacred to us as Christ's own person, and by means of it grateful memories of all He was and did throng into the mind.

Again, the form of this memorial is fitted to recall the actual life and death of the Lord. It is His body and blood we are invited by the symbols to remember. By them we are brought into the presence of an actual

living Person. Our religion is not a theory; it is not a speculation, a system of philosophy putting us in possession of a true scheme of the universe and guiding us to a sound code of morals; it is, above all, a personal matter. We are saved by being brought into right personal relations. And in this Sacrament we are reminded of this and are helped to recognise Christ as an actual living Person, who by His body and blood, by His actual humanity, saved us. The body and blood of Christ remind us that His humanity was as substantial as our own, and His life as real. He redeemed us by the actual human life He led and by the death He died, by His use of the body and soul we make other uses of. And we are saved by remembering Him and by assimilating the spirit of His life and death.

But especially, when Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of Me," did He mean that His people to all time should remember that He had given Himself wholly to them and for them. The symbols of His body and blood were intended to keep us in mind that all that gave Him a place among men He devoted to us. By giving His flesh and blood He means that He gives us His all, Himself wholly; and by inviting us to partake of His flesh and blood He means that we must receive Him into the most real connection possible, must admit His self-sacrificing love into our heart as our most cherished possession. He bade His disciples remember Him, knowing that the death He was about to die would "draw all men unto Him," would fill the despairing with hopes of purity and happiness, would cause countless sinners to say to themselves with soul-subduing rapture, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." He knew that the love shown in His death

and the hopes it creates would be prized as the world's redemption, and that to all time men would be found turning to Him and saying, "If I forget Thee, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember Thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not prefer Thee above my chief joy." And therefore He presents Himself to us as He died: as One whose love for us actually brought Him to the deepest abasement and sorest suffering, and whose death opens for us a way to the Father.

But these symbols were appointed to be for a remembrance of Christ in order that, remembering Him, we might renew our fellowship with Him. In the Sacrament there is not a mere representation of Christ or a bare commemoration of events in which we are interested; but there is also an actual, present communion between Christ and the soul. Encouraged and stimulated by the outward signs, we, in our own soul and for ourselves, accept Christ and the blessings He brings. There is in the bread and wine themselves nothing that can profit us, but we are by their means to "discern the Lord's body." When Christ is said to be present in the bread and the wine, nothing mysterious or magical is meant. It is meant that He is spiritually present to those who believe. He is present in the Sacrament as He is present to faith at any time and in any place; only, these signs which God puts into our hands to assure us of His gift of Christ to us help us to believe that Christ is given, and make it easier for us to rest in Him.

CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should

have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"—1 Cor. xii. 1-30.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

THIS Epistle is well fitted to disabuse our minds of the idea that the primitive Church was in all respects superior to the Church of our own day. We turn page after page, and find little but contention, jealousies, errors, immorality, fantastic ideas, immodesty, irreverence, profanity. At this point in the Epistle we do come upon a state of things which differentiates the primitive Church from our own; but here too the superior advantages of those early Christians were sadly abused by ignorance and envy. The members of the Corinthian Church were possessed of "spiritual gifts." They were endowed at their conversion or at baptism with certain powers which they had not previously possessed, and which were due to the influence of the Holy Spirit. It would have been surprising had so entire a revolution in human feelings and prospects as Christianity introduced not been accompanied by some extraordinary and abnormal manifestation. The new Divine life which was suddenly poured into human nature stirred it to unusual power. Men and women who yesterday could only sit and condole with their sick friends found themselves to-day in so elevated a state of mind that they could impart to the sick vital energy. Young men who had been brought up in idolatry and ignorance suddenly found their minds

filled with new and stimulating ideas which they felt impelled to impart to those who would listen. These and the like extraordinary gifts, which were very helpful in calling attention to the young Christian community, speedily passed away when the Christian Church took its place as an established institution.

If we are disposed to question the genuineness of those manifestations because in our own day the Spirit of Christ does not produce them, there are two considerations which should weigh with us. First, that which Browning urges: that miracles which were once needed are now no longer required, because they served the purpose for which they were given. As when you sow a plot in a garden you stick twigs round it, that no careless person may tread down and destroy the young and yet unseen plant, but when the plants have themselves become as tall and visible as the twigs, then these are useless, so if the miracles actually served to help the young Church's growth, she by their means has now become sufficiently visible and sufficiently understood to need them no more.[1]

And, secondly, it was to be expected that the first impact of these new Christian forces on the spirit of

[1] "You stick a garden-plot with ordered twigs
To show inside lie germs of herbs unborn,
And check the careless step would spoil their birth;
But when herbs wave, the guardian twigs may go,
Since should ye doubt of virtues, question kinds.
It is no longer for old twigs ye look,
Which proved once underneath lay store of seed,
But to the herb's self, by what light ye boast,
For what fruit's signs are. This book's fruit is plain,
Nor miracles need prove it any more.
Doth the fruit show? Then miracles bade 'ware
At first of root and stem, saved both till now
From trampling ox, rough boar, and wanton goat."

man should produce disturbance and violent emotions, such as could not be expected to continue as the normal condition of things. New political or social ideas suddenly possessing a people, as at the French Revolution, carry them to many actions and inspire them with an energy which cannot be normal. And gentle and without observation as were the Spirit and the kingdom of Christ, yet it was impossible but that, under the pressure of the most influential and inspiring ideas which ever possessed our race, there should be some extraordinary manifestations.

Nothing could be more natural than that these gifts should be overrated and should almost be considered as the most substantial and advantageous blessings Christianity had to offer. First being accepted as evidence of the real indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they came to be prized for their own sake. Originally designed as signs of the reality of the communication between the risen Lord and His Church, and therefore as assurances that the holiness and blessedness promised by Christ were not unattainable, they came to be regarded as themselves more precious than the holiness they promised. Given to this individual and to that in order that each might have some gift by which he could profit the community, they came to be looked upon as distinctions of which the individual was proud, and therefore introduced vanity, envy, and separation, instead of mutual esteem and helpfulness. One gift was measured with another and rated above or below it; and, as usual, what was useful could not compete with what was surprising. The gift of speaking for the spiritual profit of the hearers was little thought of in comparison with the gift of speaking in unknown tongues. Throughout this and the two following

chapters Paul explains the object of these gifts and the principle of their distribution and employment; he enounces the supremacy of love, and lays down certain rules for the guidance of meetings in which these gifts were displayed.

Paul introduces his remarks by reminding them that their previous history sufficiently explained their need of instruction. "In your former heathen state you had no experience whatever similar to that which you now have in the Church. The dumb idols to the worship of which you let yourselves be carried did not communicate powers similar to those which the Spirit now communicates to you. Consequently, novices as you are in this domain, you need a guiding thread to prevent you from going astray. This is why I instruct you."[1] And the first thing you need to guide you is a criterion by which you can judge whether so-called manifestations of the Spirit are genuine or spurious. The test is a simple one. Every one whose words or actions disparage Jesus proclaims himself to be under some other influence than that of the Spirit; every one who owns Jesus as Lord, serving Him and promoting His cause, is animated by the Spirit.

"No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed." But was there any possibility of such an utterance being heard in a Christian Church? It seems there was. It seems that very early in the history of Christianity men were found in the Church who could not reconcile themselves to the accursed death of Christ. They believed in the Gospel He proclaimed, the miracles He wrought, the kingdom He founded; but the Crucifixion was still a stumbling-block

[1] Godet.

to them. And so they framed a theory to suit their own prejudices, and held that the Divine Logos descended upon Jesus at His baptism and spoke and acted through Him, but abandoned Him before the Crucifixion. It was Jesus, a mere man, who died on the Cross the accursed death. This degradation of Jesus was not to be tolerated in the Christian Church, and was decisive as to a man's possession of true spiritual gifts. To own the lordship of Jesus was the test of a man's Christianity. Did he acknowledge as supreme that Person who had lived and died under the name of Jesus? Did he employ his spiritual gifts for the furtherance of His kingdom and as one who was really endeavouring to serve this unseen Master? Then no hesitation need be shown in admitting his claim to be animated by the Spirit of God.

In other words, Paul wishes them to understand that, after all, the only sure test of a man's Christianity is his actual submission to Christ. No wonderful works he may accomplish in the Church or in the world prove his possession of Christ's Spirit. "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." A man may gather and edify a large congregation, he may write ably in defence of Christianity, he may be recognised as a benefactor of his age, or he may be considered the most successful of missionaries, but the only test of a man's claim to be listened to by the Church is his actual submission to Christ. He will seek not his own glory, but the good of men. And as to the gifts themselves, they should be no cause of discord, for they have everything

in common: they have their source in God; they are for Christ's service; they are forms of the same Spirit. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

The new life then introduced by Christ into the individual and society was found to assume various forms and to suffice for all the needs of human nature in this world. Paul delighted to survey the variety of endowment and faculty which appeared in the Church. Wisdom, knowledge, faith, power to work miracles, extraordinary gifts of exhortation or prophecy and also of speaking in unknown tongues, capacity for managing affairs and general helpfulness—these and other gifts were the efflorescence of the new life. As the sun in spring develops each seed according to its own special kind and character, so this new spiritual force develops in each man his most intimate and special character. Christian influence is not an external appliance that clips all men after one pattern as trees in an avenue are clipped into one shape; but it is an inward and vital power which causes each to grow according to his own individuality, one with the rugged irregularity of the oak, another with the orderly richness of the plane. Variety in harmony is said to be the principle of all beauty, and it is this which the Divine Spirit in man produces. Individual distinctions are not obliterated, but developed and directed for the service of the community. At one in their allegiance to Christ, bound into one body by common affections, beliefs, and hopes, and aiming at the advancement of one cause, Christians are yet as different as other men in faculty, in temperament, in attainment.

There is no truth coming more determinedly to the front in our own day than this: that society is an organism similar to the human body. This indeed is no new idea, nor is it an exclusively Christian idea. That man was made for society and that it was each man's business to labour for the good of the whole was common Stoic doctrine. It was taught that every man should believe himself to be born, not for himself, but for the whole world. Take one out of many expressions of this truth: "You have seen a hand cut off, or a foot, or a head, lying apart from the rest of the body; that is what a man makes himself when he separates himself from others or does anything unsocial. You were made by nature a part; and it is due to the benevolence of God that, if you have become detached from the whole, you can be reunited to it." And in the very earliest days, when the populace of Rome became disaffected and seditious and retired outside the city walls to a camp of their own, Menenius Agrippa went out to them and uttered his fable which Shakespeare has helped to make famous. He related how the various members of the body—the hand, the eye, the ear—mutinied and refused to work any longer because it seemed to them that all the food and enjoyment for which they toiled went to another member, and not to them. It was of course easy for the accused member to clear itself of the charge of inactivity and show that the food it received was not retained for its own exclusive use, but was distributed through the rivers of the blood, and how "the strongest nerves and small inferior veins" from it received the natural competency whereby they lived.

But although this comparison of society to the body is not new, it is now being more seriously and scientific-

ally examined and pushed to its legitimate conclusions and applications. The "real meaning of the doctrine that society is an organism is that an individual has no life except that which is social, and that he cannot realize his own purposes except in realizing the larger purposes of society." All the organs of the body by which we do our work in the world and earn our bread are themselves maintained in life and fulfil the end of their own existence by working for and maintaining the whole body; and except in the common life of the body they cannot be maintained at all. It is the same with the other organs of the body. The heart, the lungs, the digestive organs, have hard and constant work to do; but only by doing it can they fulfil the very purpose of their existence and maintain themselves in life by contributing to the life of the body in which alone they can live at all. The same principle holds good in society. It is obvious in trade and commerce; a man can only maintain himself in life by helping to maintain other people. And the ideal society is one in which each man should not only yield reluctantly to the compulsion of this natural law, but should clearly see the great ends for which mankind exists and labour zealously to promote these ends, should as eagerly seek what contributes to the good of the whole as the hand is stretched out for food or as the palate relishes what stays the appetite and nourishes the whole body.

Illustrating the relation of Christians to one another by the figure of the members of a body, Paul suggests several ideas.

1. The unity of Christians is a vital unity. The members of the body of Christ form one whole because they partake of one common life. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or

Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." The unity of those who together form the body of Christ is not a mechanical unity, as of a pound of shot in a bag; nor is it a unity imposed by external force, as of caged wild beasts in a menagerie; nor is it a unity of mere accidental juxtaposition, as of passengers in a train or of the inhabitants of a town. But as the life of the human body maintains all the various members and nourishes them to a well-proportioned and harmonious growth, so is it in the body of Christ. Remove from the human body the life that supports it, and all the members fall away from connection with one another; but so long as the life is retained it assimilates in the most surprising way all nutriment to its own precise type and form. The lion and the tiger may eat precisely the same food, but that food nourishes in each a different form. The life that animates the human body assimilates nutriment to its own uses, imparting to each member its due proportion and maintaining all the members in their relation to one another.

The unity of Christians is a unity of this kind, a vital unity. The same spiritual life exists in all Christians, derived from the same source, supplying them with similar energy, and prompting them to the same habits and aims. They accept the Spirit of Christ, and so are formed into one body, being no more isolated, self-seeking, and each man fighting for his own hand, but banded together for the promotion of one common cause. There is no clashing between the interests of the individual and the interests of the society or kingdom to which he belongs. The member finds its only life and function in the body. It is by the freest and most deliberate exercise of his reason

and his will that a man attaches himself to Christ, seeing that by so doing he enters the only path to real happiness and attainment. The individual can only utter and fulfil his best self by doing his possible for society. His devotement to public interests is no self-destroying generosity, but the dictate of duty and of reason. To quote a writer who deals with this matter from the philosophical point of view, "he who has made the welfare of the race his aim has done so, not from a generous choice, but because he regards the pursuit of this welfare as his imperative duty. The welfare of the race is his own ideal, what he must realize in order to be what he *ought* to be. The welfare of the race is his own welfare, which he must seek because he must be *himself*. Cromwell, Luther, Mahomet, were heroes, not because they did something over and above what they *ought* to have done, but because their *ideal self* was coextensive with the larger life of their world. 'I can no other' was the voice of each. . . . Their large purposes were what they owed to themselves just as much as to their world."[1]

Those who cannot philosophically reconcile the claims of society and the claims of the individual are yet enabled by their attachment to Christ and by their acceptance of His Spirit to merge self in the larger whole of Christ's body and find their truest life in seeking the good of others. It is by their acceptance of Christ's Spirit as the source and Guide of their own life that they enter into fellowship with the community of men.

2. Paul is careful to show that the very efficiency of the body depends upon the multiplicity and variety

[1] Professor Jones in *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*

of the members of which it is composed: "If they were all one member, where were the body?" "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?" The lowest forms of life have either no distinct organs or very few; but the higher we ascend in the scale of life the more numerous and more distinctly differentiated are the organs. In the lower forms one member discharges several functions, and the animal uses the same organ for locomotion as it uses for eating and digesting; in the higher forms each department of life and activity is presided over by its own sense or organ. The same law holds good of society. Among tribes low down in the scale of civilisation each man is his own farmer, or shepherd, or huntsman, and his own priest, and butcher, and cook, and clothier. Each man does everything for himself. But as men become civilised the various wants of society are supplied by different individuals, and every function is specialized. The same law necessarily holds true of the body of Christ. It is highly organized, and no one organ can do the whole work of the body. Therefore one has this gift, another that. And the more nearly this body approaches perfection, the more various and distinct will these gifts be.

One important function of the Church therefore is to elicit and utilize every faculty for good which its members possess. In a society in which Christianity is but beginning to take root, it may fall to one man to do the work of the whole Christian body—to be eye, tongue, foot, hand, and heart. He must evangelise, he must teach, he must legislate, he must enforce law; he must preach, he must pray, he must lead the singing; he must plan the church and help to build

it; translate the Scriptures and help to print them; teach the savages to wear a little clothing and help to make it; dissuade them from war and instruct them in the arts of peace, instilling a taste for agriculture and commerce. But when the Christian society has left this rudimentary stage behind, those various functions are discharged by different individuals; and as it advances towards a perfect condition its functions and organs become as multifarious and as distinctly differentiated as the organs of the human body. Every member of the Church is different from every other, and has a gift of his own. Some are fitted to nourish the Church herself and maintain the body of Christ in health and efficiency; some are fitted to act on the world outside: they are eyes to perceive, feet to pursue, hands to lay hold of those who are straying from the light.

Every one therefore who is drawn into the fellowship of the body of Christ has something to contribute to its good and to the work it does. He is in connection with that body because the Spirit of Christ has possessed and assimilated him to it; and that Spirit energizes in him. He may not see that anything the Church is presently engaged in is work he can undertake. He may feel out of place and awkward when he attempts to do what others are doing. He feels himself like a greyhound, compelled to run by scent and not by sight, and expected to do the work of a pointer, and not seize his quarry, or as if set to do the work of an eye with the hand. He can do it only in a groping, fumbling, imperfect manner. But this is only a hint that he is meant for other work, not for none. And it is for him to discover what his Christian instincts lead him to. The eye does not need to be told it is

for seeing, or the hand that it is for grasping. The eye and the hand of the child instinctively do their office. And where there is true Christian life, it matters not what the member of Christ's body be, it will find its function, even though that function is new in the Church's experience.

The fact then that you are very different from the ordinary members of the Church is no reason for supposing you do not belong to Christ's body. The ear is very different from the eye; it can detect neither form nor colour; it cannot enjoy a landscape or welcome a friend: but "if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?" Is it not, on the contrary, its very diversity from the eye that makes it a welcome addition to the body, enriching its capabilities and enlarging its usefulness? It is not by comparison with other people that we can tell whether we belong to the body of Christ, nor is our function in that body determined by anything which some other member is doing. The very difficulty we find in adjusting ourselves to others and in finding any already existing Christian work to which we can give ourselves is a hint that we have the opportunity of adding to the Church's efficiency. The Church can claim to be perfect only when she embraces the most diversely gifted individuals and allows the tastes, instincts, and aptitudes of all to be used in her work.

3. As there is to be no slothful self-disparagement in the body of Christ, so must there be no depreciation of other people. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." When zealous people discover new methods, they forthwith despise the normal ecclesiastical system that has stood the test and is

stamped with the approval of centuries. One method cannot regenerate and Christianize the world, any more than one member can do the whole work of the body. Paul goes even further, and reminds us that the "feeble" parts of the body are "the more necessary;" the heart, the brain, the lungs, and all those delicate members of the body that do its essential work entirely hidden from view are more necessary than the hand or the foot, the loss of which no doubt cripples, but does not kill. So in the Church of Christ it is the hidden souls who by their prayers and domestic godliness maintain the whole body in health and enable more conspicuously gifted members to do their part. Contempt for any member of the body of Christ is most unseemly and sinful. Yet men seem unable ever to learn how many members, and how various, it takes to complete a body, and how needful are those functions they themselves are wholly unable to discharge.

4. Lastly, Paul is careful to teach that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man *to profit withal*." It is not for the glorification of the individual that the new spiritual life manifests itself in this or that remarkable form, but for the edification of the body of Christ. However beautiful any feature of a face may be, it is hideous apart from its position among the rest and lying by itself. Morally hideous and no longer admirable is the Christian who attracts attention to himself and does not subordinate his gift to the advantage of the whole body of Christ. If in the human body any member asserts itself and is not subservient to the one central will, that is recognised as disease: St. Vitus' dance. If any member ceases to obey the central will, paralysis is indicated. And equally so is disease indicated wherever a Christian

seeks his own ends or his own glorification, and not the advantage of the whole body. Simon Magus sought to make a reputation and a competence for himself by spiritual gifts. What in his case was mainly stupidity is in ours sin if we use such powers and opportunities as we have for our own purposes, and not with a view to the profit of others.

Let us then endeavour to recognise our position as members of Christ's body. Let us with seriousness accept Him as appointed by God to be our true spiritual Life and Head; let us consider what we have it in our power to do for the good of the whole body; and let us put aside all jealousy, envy, and selfishness, and with meekness honour the work done by others while humbly and hopefully doing our own.

NO GIFT LIKE LOVE.

"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."
—I Cor. xii. 31—xiii. 13.

CHAPTER XIX.

NO GIFT LIKE LOVE.

THIS is one of the passages of Scripture which an expositor scruples to touch. Some of the bloom and delicacy of surface passes from the flower in the very handling which is meant to exhibit its fineness of texture. But although this eulogium of love is its own best interpreter, there are points in it which require both explanation and enforcement.

In the preceding chapter (xii.) Paul has striven to suppress the envy, vanity, and discord which had resulted from the abuse of the spiritual gifts with which the Corinthian Church was endowed. He has explained that these gifts were bestowed for the edification of the Church, and not for the glorification of the individual; and that therefore the individual should covet, not the most surprising, but the most profitable, of these manifestations of the Spirit. "Covet the best gifts," he says: Desire the gifts which edify, the gift of exhortation, or, as it was then called, prophecy. And yet there is a more excellent way to edify the Church than even to exercise apostolic gifts; this is the way of love, which he proceeds to celebrate.

1. Love is the ligament which binds together the several members of the body of Christ, the cement which keeps the stones of the temple together. With-

out love there can be no body, no temple, only isolated stones or disconnected, and therefore useless, members. The extraordinary gifts of which the Corinthians were so proud cannot compete with love. They may profit the Church, but without love they are no evidence of the ripe Christian manhood of their possessor. Suppose I speak all possible languages—languages of angels, if you please, as well as languages of men—and have not love, I am but a mere instrument played upon by another, no better than a bit of sounding brass, a trumpet or a cymbal, not enjoying, nor moved by, nor swayed by the music I make, but insensible. As Bunyan says, "Is it so much to be a fiddle?" If no man understands the language I am impelled to use, then I am but as a clanging cymbal, making a noise without significance. And even though I speak a tongue which some stranger recognises as his own, it is not I who am coming into contact with his soul through a living influence; I am but used as an instrument of brass is used by the player.

Or take even the higher gift of prophecy. Suppose I am enlightened by the Spirit so that I can explain things hitherto misunderstood; suppose I can make revelations of important truths which have been accessible to none besides; suppose even that I have all faith, faith, as the rabbis say, to remove mountains; suppose I can work miracles, heal the sick, raise the dead, set the whole world agape with astonishment, all this without love, however it may profit others, profits myself not at all, and neither brings me into closer connection with Christ nor gives assurance of my sound spiritual condition. I may be among the number of those who, after doing wonderful works

in Christ's name, are repudiated by Him. For as among ourselves there are many gifts, such as learning, eloquence, sagacity, musical, and poetical, and artistic genius, which may greatly contribute to the edification of the Church, and yet reside in persons who can make little claim to sanctity, so in the early Church these extraordinary spiritual gifts seem to have carried with them no evidence of their possessors' personal religion. They had certainly begun a Christian career, but they might be deteriorating in character instead of developing and maturing.

There were, however, two Christian actions which might seem to be beyond question as evidence of a sound spiritual condition: almsgiving and martyrdom. The young man who sought guidance from Christ lacked but one thing: to sell his property and give to the poor. But, says Paul, "though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." It is only too possible to do great acts of charity from a love of display, or from an uneasy sense of duty which parts reluctantly and grudgingly with what it bestows. That is understood. Common-sense tells every one but the abjectly superstitious man himself that it is as impossible to buy spiritual health on a bed of death as it is to buy the cure of his mortal disease.

But martyrdom? Can a man give any stronger proof of his faith than to give his body to be burned? Certainly one would with great reluctance disparage the integrity of those courageous persons who in many ages of the Church's history have gone without flinching to the stake. But, in point of fact, a willingness to suffer for one's opinion or one's faith is not in every case a guarantee of the existence of a heart transformed

from selfishness to love. At one period martyrdom became fashionable, and Christian teachers were compelled to remonstrate with those who fanatically rushed to the stake and the arena, just as suicide once became fashionable at Rome and evoked prohibitory legislation.

Not without reason then does Paul so emphatically warn men against looking upon such exceptional actions or such extraordinary endowments as undoubted evidence of a healthy spiritual state. Gifts and conduct which bring men prominently before the eye of the Church or the world are often no index to the character; and if they be not rooted in and guided by love, their possessor has little reason to congratulate himself. Too often it is a man's snare to judge himself by what he does rather than by what he is. It is so easy comparatively to do great things supposing certain gifts be present; it is at least always possible to human nature to make sacrifices and engage in arduous duties. The impossible thing is love. No eye to advantageous consequences or to public opinion can enable a man to love; no desire to maintain a character for piety can produce that grace. Love must be spontaneous, from the soul's self, not produced by considerations or the requirements of a position we wish to reach or to maintain. It must be the unconstrained, natural outcome of the real man. Not even the consideration of Christ's love will produce love in us if there be not a real sympathy with Christ. A sense of benefit received will not produce love where there is no similarity of sentiment. Love cannot be got up. It is the result of God entering and possessing the soul. "He that loveth is born of God." That is the only account to be given of the matter. And therefore it is that where love is absent all is absent.

And yet how the mistake of the Corinthians is perpetuated from age to age. The Church is smitten with a genuine admiration of talent, of the faculties which make the body of Christ bulk larger in the eye of the world, while too often love is neglected. After all that the Church has learned of the dangers which accompany theological controversy, and of the hollowness of much that passes for growth, intellectual gifts are frequently prized more highly than love. Do we not ourselves often become aware that the absence of this one thing needful is writing vanity and failure on all we do and on all we are? If we are not yet in the real fellowship of the body of Christ, possessed by a love that prompts us to serve the whole, with what complacency can we look on other acquirements? Do parents sufficiently impress on their children that all successes at school and in early life are as nothing compared to the more obscure but much more substantial acquisition of a thoroughly unselfish, generous, catholic spirit of service?

2. Paul having illustrated the supremacy of love by showing that without it all other gifts are profitless, proceeds (vers. 4-7) to celebrate its own positive excellence. It is possible, though unlikely, that Paul may have read the eulogium pronounced on love by the greatest of Greek writers five hundred years before: "Love is our lord, supplying kindness and banishing unkindness, giving friendship and forgiving enmity, the joy of the good, the wonder of the wise, the amazement of the gods; desired by those who have no part in him, and precious to those who have the better part in him; parent of delicacy, luxury, desire, fondness, softness, grace; careful of the good, uncareful of the evil. In every word, work, wish,

fear—pilot, helper, defender, saviour; glory of gods and men, leader best and brightest; in whose footsteps let every man follow, chanting a hymn and joining in that fair strain with which love charms the souls of gods and men." Five hundred years after Paul another eulogium was pronounced on love by Mohammed: "Every good act is charity: your smiling in your brother's face; your putting a wanderer in the right road; your giving water to the thirsty, or exhortations to others to do right. A man's true wealth hereafter is the good he has done in this world to his fellow-man. When he dies, people will ask, What property has he left behind him? but the angels will ask what good deeds he has sent before him."

Paul's eulogium is the more effective because it exhibits in detail the various ramifications of this exuberant and fruitful grace, how it runs out into all our intercourse with our fellow-men and carries with it a healing and sweetening virtue. It imbues the entire character, and contains in itself the motive of all Christian conduct. It is "the fulfilling of the Law." Its claims are paramount because it embraces all other virtues. If a man has love, there is no grace impossible to him or into which love will not on occasion develop. Love becomes courage of the most absolute kind where danger threatens its object. It begets a wisdom and a skill which put to shame technical training and experience. It brings forth self-restraint and temperance as its natural fruit; it is patient, forgiving, modest, humble, sympathizing. It is quite true that

> "As every lovely hue is light,
> So every grace is love."

Thomas a Kempis dwells with evident relish on

the varied capacity of this all-comprehending grace. "Love," he says, "feels no burden, regards not labours, would willingly do more than it is able, pleads not impossibilities, because it feels sure that it can and may do all things. Love is swift, sincere, pious, pleasant, and delightful; strong, patient, faithful, prudent, longsuffering, manly, and never seeking itself: it is circumspect, humble, and upright; sober, chaste, steadfast, quiet, and guarded in all its senses."

Paul's description of the behaviour of love is drawn in view of the discords and vanities of the Corinthians and as a contrast to their unseemly and unbrotherly conduct. "Love suffereth long, and is kind;" it reveals itself in a magnanimous bearing of injuries and in a considerate and tender imparting of benefits. It returns good for evil; not readily provoked by slights and wrongs, it ever seeks to spend itself in kindnesses. Then there is nothing envious, vain, or selfish in love. "Love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself." It neither grudges others their gifts, nor is eager to show off its own. The pallor and bitter sneer of envy and the ridiculous swagger of the boastful are equally remote from love. "It is not puffed up, and doth not behave itself unseemly." Love saves a man from making a fool of himself by consequential conduct, and by thrusting himself into positions which betray his incompetence, and by immodest, irreverent, and eccentric actions. It balances a man and gives him sense by bringing him into right relations with his fellows and prompting him to esteem their gifts more highly than his own. Neither is love ever on the watch for its own rights, scrupulously exacting the remuneration, the recognition, the applause, the precedence, the deference, that may be due: "it seeketh

not its own." "It is not easily provoked, nor does it take account of evil;" it is not fired with resentment at every little slight, and does not make a mental note and lay up in its memory the contempt shown by one, the indifference shown by another, the intention to wound betrayed by a third. Love is too little occupied with itself to feel these exhibitions of malice very keenly. It is bent on winning the battle for others, and the wounds received in the cause are made light of. Its eye is still on the advantage to be gained by the needy, and not on itself.

Another manifestation of love, and one the mention of which pricks the conscience, is that it "rejoiceth not in unrighteousness." It has no malignant pleasure in seeing reputations exploded, in discovering the sin, the hypocrisy, the mistakes, of other men. "It rejoiceth with the truth." Where truth scatters calumny and shows that suspicions were ill-founded, love rejoices. Successful wickedness, whether for or against its own interests, love has no pleasure in; but where goodness triumphs love is thrilled with a sympathetic joy. In place of rejoicing in discovered wickedness because it lowers a rival or seems to leave a more prominent position to itself, love hastens to cover the fault. "It covereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things." It has untiring charity, making every allowance, proposing every excuse, believing that explanations can be made, accepting greedily such as are made, slow to be persuaded that things are as bad as rumour paints, hoping against hope for the acquittal, or at any rate for the reformation, of every culprit.

3. Finally, Paul shows the superiority of love by comparing it in point of permanence, first, with the

gifts of which the Corinthians were so proud, and, second, with the universal Christian graces.

"Love never faileth;" it is imperishable: it grows from less to more; there never comes a time when it gives place to some higher quality of soul, or when it is unimportant whether a man has it or no, or when it is no longer the criterion of the whole moral state. The most surprising spiritual gifts can make no such claim. "Whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease." These gifts were for the temporary benefit of the Church. However some might misapprehend their significance and fancy that these extraordinary manifestations were destined to characterise the Christian Church throughout its history, Paul was not so deceived. He was prepared for their disappearance. They were the scaffolding which no one thinks of or inquires after when the building is finished, the school-books which become the merest rubbish when the boy is educated, the prop which the forester removes when the sapling has become a tree.

But knowledge? The knowledge of God and of Divine things in which good men delight, and which is esteemed the stamina of character—is not this permanent? No, says Paul. "Knowledge also shall be done away." And to illustrate his meaning Paul uses two figures: the figure of a child's knowledge, which is gradually lost in the knowledge of the man, and the figure of an object dimly seen through a semi-transparent medium. We shall understand the significance and the bearing of these figures if we consider that when we speak of imperfect knowledge we may mean either of two things: we may either mean that it is imperfect in amount or that it is imperfect

in quality, in accuracy. When a boy begins the study of Euclid, the first proposition he learns is absolutely accurate and true; he may add to it, but he can never improve upon it. His knowledge is imperfect in amount, but so far as it goes it is absolutely reliable; he may build upon it and deduce other truths from it. But when we are walking on a misty morning and see an object at a distance, our knowledge is imperfect, but in quite another sense. It is imperfect in the sense of being dim, uncertain, inaccurate. We see that there is something before us, but whether a human being or a gatepost we cannot say. A little nearer we see it is a human being, but whether old or young, friend or no friend, we cannot say. Here the growth of our knowledge is from dimness to accuracy.

Both the figures used by Paul imply that our knowledge of Divine things is of this latter kind. They loom, as it were, through a mist. Many of their details are invisible. We have not got them under our hand to examine at leisure. Our present knowledge is as the light of a lantern by which we can pick our way, or as the starlight, for which we are thankful in the meantime; but when the sun of a wider, deeper, truer knowledge rises, what we now call knowledge shall be quite eclipsed. "When I was a child," says Paul, "I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." That is to say, Paul was distinctly aware that much of our present knowledge is provisional. We do not know the very truth, but only such approximations to the truth and such symbols of it as we are able to understand. We are at present in the state of childhood, which cherishes many notions destined to be exploded by maturer knowledge. We

think of God as a Being very similar to ourselves, only very much greater; and in our present state we must be content with this imperfect knowledge, but prepared to put it away as "childish" when fuller knowledge comes. The atoning death of Christ may be spoken of as the substitutionary sacrifice of a Victim on whom our guilt is laid; but to speak thus of the death of Christ is to make large use of the language of symbol, and we must hold our minds open for the fuller knowledge which will make such language seem quite inadequate. Paul's language warns us against speaking, or thinking, or acting as if our knowledge of Divine things were perfectly accurate, and as if therefore we might freely and unhesitatingly condemn all who differ from us.

The other figure is still more precise, although there is great difference of opinion as to what Paul means by seeing now "through a glass, darkly." The word here rendered "glass" is used either for the dim metallic mirror used by the ancients, or for the semi-translucent talc which was their substitute for glass in windows. Of these two meanings it is the latter which in this passage gives the best sense. It was a common figure among the rabbis to illustrate dimness of vision. If they wished to denote direct and clear vision, they spoke of seeing a thing face to face; if they wished to denote uncertain and hazy vision, they spoke of seeing through a glass—that is, through a substance only a little more transparent than our own dimmed glass, through which you can see objects, but cannot tell exactly what they are or who the persons are who are moving. Thus they had a common saying, "All other prophets saw as through nine glasses, Moses as through one." The rabbis, too, had another saying

which illustrates the second part of this twelfth verse: "Even as a king, who with common people talks through a veil, so that he sees them, but they do not see him, but when his friend comes to speak to him, he removes this veil, so that he might see him face to face, even so did God speak to Moses apparently, and not darkly."[1]

Interpreting Paul's language then by the language of his own kith and kin and of the schools in which he had been educated, his meaning is that in this life we can see Divine things only dimly and as through a veil, but hereafter we shall see them without the intervention of any obscuring medium. Here and now we can make out only the general outline of the unseen realities; but hereafter we shall know even as we are known, shall see God as directly as He now sees us. We shall not have even then the same perfect knowledge of Him that He has of us, but shall see Him as immediately and directly as He sees us. Now He wears a veil through which He can see, but through which we cannot see; hereafter He will lay aside this. Our present knowledge of God and of all things unseen is necessarily vague, not susceptible of exact definition. There are some things of which we may be quite sure, others of which we must be content to remain in uncertainty. We may be quite sure that God exists, that He loves us, that He has sent His Son to save us; but if we attempt to run a sharp and clear outline round the truths thus dimly seen, we shall inevitably err.

It may be added that while Paul warns us against supposing that our knowledge is perfect, he does not mean to brand it as useless or delusive. On the

[1] See the passages in Wetstein and Schöttgen.

contrary, his figures imply that it is necessary for our growth, and that unless we honestly use such knowledge as we have, we cannot win our way to knowledge that is perfect. It is the imperfect knowledge of the child which leads it on to further attainment. The fundamental doctrine of the Christian creed that there are three Persons in one God is certainly a very rough and childish expression of a truth far deeper than we can understand, but to reject this doctrine because it is evidently only an approximation to a truth which cannot be defined and stated in final terms is to refuse to submit to the conditions under which we now live and to ape a manhood which in point of fact we do not possess.

Paul's crowning testimony to the worth of love is given in the thirteenth verse: "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love." He does not mean that love abides while faith becomes sight and hope fruition. Rather he indicates that faith and hope are also imperishable, and hereby distinguished from the spiritual gifts of which he has been speaking. Both in this life and in that which is to come faith, hope, and love abide. For faith and hope pass away only in one aspect of their exercise. If by faith be meant belief in things unseen, this passes away when the unseen is seen. If hope be taken as referring only to the future state in general, then when that state is reached hope passes away. But faith and hope are really permanent elements of human life, faith being the confidence we have in God, and hope the ever-renewed expectancy of future good. But while faith maintains us in connection with God, love is the enjoyment of God and the partaking of His nature; and while hope renews our energy and

guides our aims, it can bring us to no better thing than love.

To see the beauty, fruitfulness, and sufficiency of love is easy, but to have it as the mainspring of our own life most difficult, indeed the greatest of all attainments. This we instinctively recognise as the true test of our condition. Have we that in us which really knits us to God and our fellow-men and prompts us to do our utmost for them? Have we in us this new affection which destroys selfishness and brings us into true and lasting relations with all we have to do with? This is the root of all good, the beginning of all blessedness, because the germ of all likeness to God, who Himself is love.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND PUBLIC WORSHIP.

"Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the Church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edifying. Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Brethren, be not children

in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. In the Law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear Me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. If therefore the whole Church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace, as in all Churches of the saints. Let your women keep silence in the Churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the Law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the Church. What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order."—1 Cor. xiv. 1-40.

CHAPTER XX.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND PUBLIC WORSHIP.

IN the first twenty-five verses of this chapter Paul gives his estimate of the comparative value of the two chief spiritual gifts: speaking with tongues and prophesying; in the latter half of the chapter he lays down certain rules which were to guide the exercise of these gifts and certain principles on which all the worship and public services of the Church should proceed.

A difficulty, however, meets us at the outset. We have no opportunity of observing these gifts in exercise, and cannot readily understand them. With prophecy indeed there need be no great difficulty. Prophesying is speaking for God, whether the utterance regards present or future matters. When Moses complained that he had no gift of utterance, God said, "Aaron shall be thy prophet;" that is, shall speak for thee, or be thy spokesman. Prediction is not necessarily any part of the prophet's function. It may be so, and often it was so, but a man might be a prophet who had no revelation of the future. In the sense in which Paul uses the word, a prophet was "an inspired teacher and exhorter who revealed to men the secrets of God's will and word and the secrets of their own hearts for the purpose of conversion and edification." The function of the prophet is indicated in the third verse: "He that

prophesieth speaketh for edification, and exhortation, and comfort;" and still further in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses, where the results of prophesying are described in terms precisely such as we should use to describe the results of efficacious preaching. The hearer is "convinced," is conscious in himself that the words spoken are shedding light and carrying conviction into the recesses of his heart. The gift of prophecy, then, was the endowment which enabled a Christian to speak so as to bring the mind and spirit of the hearer into touch with God.

But the gift of tongues is involved in greater obscurity. On its first occurrence, as recorded in the book of Acts, it would seem to have been the gift of speaking in foreign languages. We are told that the strangers from Asia Minor, Parthia, the shores of the Black Sea, Africa, and Italy, when they heard the disciples speaking, recognised that they were speaking intelligible languages. One man was attracted by the sound of his native Arabic; another heard the familiar Latin; a third for the first time in Jerusalem heard a Jew speaking the language he was accustomed to hear on the banks of the Nile. Naturally they were confounded by the circumstance, "every man hearing," as it is said, "his own language, the tongue wherein he was born." It would certainly seem probable, therefore, that, whether the gift afterwards changed its character or not, it was originally the power of speaking in a foreign language so as to be intelligible to any one who understood that language.

This gift was of course communicated, not as a permanent acquisition, to fit men to preach the Gospel in foreign countries, but merely as a temporary impulse to utter words which to themselves had no meaning. All

spiritual gifts seem to have been inconstant in their influence. Paul had the gift of healing, and yet he "left Trophimus at Miletum sick;" his dear friend Epaphroditus was sick nigh unto death without Paul being able to help him; and when Timothy was unwell, he did not cure him by miracle, but by a very commonplace prescription. So, too, when a man by study and practice acquires the use of a foreign tongue, he has command of that language so long as memory lives and for all purposes; but this "gift of tongues" was only available "as the Spirit gave utterance" to each, and failed to communicate a constant and complete command of the language. It is not to be supposed therefore that this gift was bestowed in order to enable men more easily to proclaim the Gospel to all races. And at no period of the world's history was such a gift less needed, Greek and Latin being very generally understood throughout the Roman world. Perhaps more persons grew up bilingual in that day than at any other time.

If then this gift was intermittent and did not qualify its possessor to use a foreign language for the ordinary purposes of life or for preaching the Gospel, what was its use? It served the same purpose as other miracles; it made visible and called attention to the entrance of new powers into human nature. As Paul says, it was "for them that believe not, not for them that believe." It was meant to excite inquiry, not to instruct the mind of the Christian. It produced conviction that among the followers of Christ new powers were at work. The evidence of this took a shape which seemed to intimate that the religion of Christ was suitable for every race of mankind. This gift of tongues seemed to claim all nations as the object of Christ's work. The most remote and insignificant tribe was accessible to Him. He

knew their language, suited Himself to their peculiarities, and claimed kindred with them.

It must, however, be said that the common opinion of scholars is that the gift of tongues did not consist in ability to speak a foreign language even temporarily, but in an exalted frame of mind which found expression in sounds or words belonging to no human language. What was thus uttered has been compared to the "merry, unmeaning shouts of boyhood, getting rid of exuberant life, uttering in sounds a joy for which manhood has no words." These ecstatic cries or exclamations were not always understood either by the person uttering them, or by any one else, so that there was always a risk of such utterances being considered either as the ravings of lunatics, or, as in the first instance, the thick and inarticulate mutterings of drunkards. But sometimes there was present a person in the same key of feeling whose spirit vibrated to the note struck by the speaker, and who was able to render his inarticulate sounds into intelligible speech. For as music can only be interpreted by one who has a feeling for music, and as the inarticulate language of tears, or sighs, or groans can be comprehended by a sympathetic soul, so the tongues could be interpreted by those whose spiritual state corresponded to that of the gifted person.

At various periods of the Church's history these manifestations have been reproduced. The Montanists of the early Church, the Camisards of France at the close of the seventeenth century, and the Irvingites of our own country claimed that they possessed similar gifts. Probably all such manifestations are due to violent nervous agitation. The early Quakers showed their wisdom in treating all physical manifestations as physical.

Comparing these two gifts, prophecy and speaking with tongues, Paul very decidedly gives the preference to the former, and this mainly on the score of its greater utility. It often happened that when one of the Christians spoke in tongues there was no one present who could interpret. However exalted the man's own spirit might be, the congregation could derive no benefit from his utterances. And if a number of persons spoke at once, as they seemed to do in Corinth, on the pretext that they could not control themselves, any unbeliever who came in and heard this Babel of sound would naturally conclude, as Paul says, that he had stumbled into a ward of lunatics. Such disorder must not be. If there were no one present who could interpret what the speakers with tongues were saying, they must be silent. Apart from interpretation speaking with tongues was mere noise, the blare of a trumpet sounded by one who did not know one call from another, and which was mere unintelligible sound. Prophesying was not liable to these abuses. All understood it, and could learn something from it.

From this preference shown by Paul for the less showy but more useful gift, we may gather that to make public worship the occasion of self-display or sensational exhibitions is to degrade it. This is a hint for the pulpit rather than for the pew. Preachers must resist the temptation to preach for effect, to make a sensation, to produce fine sermons. The desire to be recognised as able to move men, to say things smartly, to put the truth freshly, to be eloquent, or to be sensible is always striving against the simple-minded purpose of edifying Christ's people. Worshippers as well as preachers may, however, be so tempted. They

may sing with a gratified sense of exhibiting a good voice. They may find greater pleasure in what is sensational in worship than in what is simple and intelligible.

Again, we here see that worship in which the understanding bears no part receives no countenance from Paul. "I will pray with the spirit; I will pray with the understanding also." Where the prayers of the Church are in an unknown tongue, such as Latin, the worshipper may indeed pray with the spirit, and may be edified thereby, but his worship would be better did he pray with the understanding also. Music unaccompanied by words induces in some temperaments an impressible condition which has an appearance of devoutness and probably something of the reality; but such devoutness is apt to be either hazy or sentimental or both, unless by the help of accompanying words the understanding goes hand in hand with feeling.

No countenance can be found in this chapter to the idea that worship should exclude preaching and become the sole purpose of the assembling together of Christian people. Some temperaments incline towards worship, but resent being preached to or instructed. The reverential and serious feelings which are quickened into life by devotional forms of prayer may be scattered by the buffoonery or ineptitudes of the preacher. Exasperation, unbelief, contempt, in the mind of the hearer may be the only results achieved by some sermons. It may occasionally occur to us that the Christian world would be very much the better of some years of silence, and that results which have not been reached by floods of preaching might be attained if these floods were allowed to ebb and a period of quiet and repose

succeed. Unquestionably there is a danger at present of leading men to suppose that religion is a thing which must be ceaselessly talked about, and which perhaps chiefly consists of talk, so that if one only hears enough, and has the right opinions, he may accept himself as a religious person. But it is one thing to say that there is at present too much preaching or too careless and unequal a distribution of preaching, and quite another thing to say there should be none.

Having given expression to his preference for prophesying, Paul goes on to indicate the manner in which the public services should be conducted. The picture he draws is one which finds no counterpart in the greater modern Churches. The chief distinction between the services of the Corinthian Church and those we are now familiar with is the much greater freedom with which in those days the membership of the Church took part in the service. "When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation." Each member of the congregation had something to contribute for the edification of the Church. The experience, the thought, the gifts, of the individual were made available for the benefit of all. One with a natural aptitude for poetry threw his devotional feeling into a metrical form, and furnished the Church with her earliest hymns. Another with innate exactness of thought set some important aspect of Christian truth so clearly before the mind of the congregation that it at once took its place as an article of faith. Another, fresh from contact with the world and intercourse with unbelieving and dissolute men, who had felt his own feet sliding and renewed his grasp on Christ, entered the meeting with the glow of conflict on his face, and

had eager words of exhortation to utter. And so passed the hours of meeting, without any fixed order, without any appointed ministry, without any uniformity of service. And certainly the freshness, fulness, and variety of such services were greatly to be desired if possibly they could be attained. We lose much of what would interest and much that would edify by enjoining silence upon the membership of the Church.

And yet, as Paul observes, there was much to be desired in those Corinthian services. Had there been some authorized official presiding over them, the abuses of which this letter speaks could not have arisen. To appeal to this chapter or to any part of this letter in proof that there should be no distinction between clergy and laity would be very bad policy. It is indeed obvious that at this time there were neither elders nor deacons, bishops nor rulers of any kind, in the Church of Corinth; but then it is quite as obvious that there was great need of them, and that the want of them had given rise to some scandalous abuses and to much disorder. The ideal condition would be one in which authority should be lodged in certain elected office-bearers, while the faculty and gift of each member in some way contributed to the good of the whole Church. In most Churches of our own day, efforts are made to utilize the Christian energies of their membership in those various charitable works which are so necessary and so abundant. But probably we should all be the better of a much freer ventilation of opinion within the Church and of listening to men who have not been educated in any particular school of theology and hold their minds closely to the realities of experience.

We cannot but ask in passing, What has become of all those inspired utterances with which the Corinthian

Church from week to week resounded? Doubtless they entered into the life of that generation and fostered the Christian character which so often shone out on the heathen world with surprising purity. Doubtless, too, the unknown teachers of those primitive Churches did much both in the way of suggesting aspects of truth to Paul and of confirming, and expounding, and illustrating his somewhat condensed and difficult teaching. Had their utterances been recorded, many obscurities of Scripture might have been removed, much light must have been reflected on the whole circle of Christian truth, and we should have been able to define more clearly the actual condition of the Christian Church. Shorthand was in common use at that time in the Roman courts, and by its means we are in possession of relics of that age of much less value than the report of one or two of these Christian meetings might have been. No such report, however, is forthcoming.

While Paul abstains from appointing office-bearers to preside at their meetings, he is careful to lay down two principles which should regulate their procedure. First, "let everything be done decently and in order." This advice was greatly needed in a Church in which the public services were sometimes turned into tumultuous exhibitions of rival gifts, each man trying to make himself heard above the din of voices, one speaking with tongues, another singing a hymn, a third loudly addressing the congregation, so that any stranger who might be attracted by the noise and step into the house could think this Christian meeting nothing else than Bedlam broke loose. Above all things, then, says Paul, conduct your meetings in a seemly fashion. Observe the rules of common decency and order. I

do not prescribe any particular forms you must observe nor any special order you must follow in your services. I do not pronounce what portion of time should be devoted to prayer nor what to praise or exhortation; nor do I require that you should in all cases begin your service in the same stereotyped manner and carry it through in the same routine. Your services must vary both in form and in substance from week to week according to the equipment of the individual members of your Church; sometimes there may be many who wish to exhort, sometimes there may be none. But in all this freedom and variety, spontaneity must not run into obtrusiveness, and variety must be saved from disorder.

The other general principle Paul lays down in the words, "Let all things be done unto edifying." Let each use his gift for the good of the congregation. Keep the great end of your meetings in view, and you need no formal rubrics. If extempore prayer is found inspiring, use it; if the old liturgy of the synagogue is preferred, retain its service; if both have advantages, employ both. Judge your methods by their bearing on the spiritual life of your members. Make no boast of your æsthetic worship, your irreproachable liturgy, your melting music, if these things do not result in a more loyal service of Christ. Do not pique yourselves on your puritanic simplicity of worship and the absence of all that is not spiritual if this bareness and simplicity do not bring you more directly into the presence of your Lord. It matters little what we eat or in what shape it is served if we are the better for our food and are maintained in health and vigour. It matters little whether the vehicle in which we travel be highly decorated or plain so long as it brings us

safely to our destination. Are we the better for our services? Is it our chief aim in them to receive and promote an earnest religious spirit and a sincere service of Christ?

It might be difficult to say whether the somewhat selfish ambition of those Corinthians to secure the surprising gifts of the Spirit or our own torpid indifference and lack of expectation is less to be commended. Certainly every one who attaches himself to Christ ought to indulge in great expectations. Through Christ lies the way out from the poverty and futility that oppress our spiritual history. From Him we may, however falsely modest we are, expect at least His own Spirit. And in this "least" there is promise of all. They who sincerely attach themselves to Christ cannot fail to end by being like Him. But lack of expectation is fatal to the Christian. If we expect nothing or very little from Christ, we might as well not be Christians. If He does not become to us a second conscience, ever present in us to warn against sin and offer opposing inducements, we might as well call ourselves by any other name. His power is exerted now not to excite to unwonted exhibitions of abnormal faculties, but to promote in us all that is most stable and substantial in character. And the fact is that they who hunger after righteousness are filled. They who expect that Christ will help them to become like Himself do become like Him. All grace is attainable. Nothing but unbelief shuts us out from it. Do not be content until you find in Christ more abundant life, until you have as clear evidence as these Corinthians had that a new spirit of power dwells within you. He Himself encourages you to expect this. It is to receive this He calls us to Him; and if we are not

expecting this spirit of life, it is because we do not understand or do not believe Him. He has come to give us the best God has to give, and the best is likeness to Himself. He has come to save our life from being a folly and a failure, and He saves it by filling it with His own Spirit. All fulness resides in Him; in Him Divine resource is made available for human needs: but the distribution is moral, not mechanical; that is to say, it depends on your willingness to receive, on your expectation of good, on your true personal attachment to Christ in spirit and in will.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen of James; then of all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."—1 Cor. xv. 1–17.

XXI.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

I. Its Place in the Christian Creed.

PAUL having now settled the minor questions of order in public worship, marriage, intercourse with the heathen, and the other various difficulties which were distracting the Corinthian Church, turns at last to a matter of prime importance and perennial interest: the resurrection of the body. This great subject he handles not in the abstract, but with a view to the particular attitude and beliefs of the Corinthians. Some of them said broadly, "There is no resurrection of the dead," although apparently they had no intention of denying that Christ had risen. Accordingly Paul proceeds to show them that the resurrection of Christ and that of His followers hang together, that the resurrection of Christ is essential to the Christian creed, that it is amply attested, and that although great difficulties surround the subject, making it impossible to conceive what the risen body will be, yet the resurrection of the body is to be looked forward to with confident hope.

It will be most convenient to consider first the place which the resurrection of Christ holds in the Christian creed; but that we may follow Paul's argument and appreciate its force, it will be necessary to make

clear to our own mind what he meant by the resurrection of Christ and what position the Corinthians sought to maintain.

First, by the resurrection of Christ Paul meant His rising from the grave with a body glorified or made fit for the new and heavenly life He had entered. Paul did not believe that the body he saw on the road to Damascus was the very body which had hung upon the cross, made of the same material, subject to the same conditions. He affirms in this chapter that flesh and blood, a natural body, cannot enter upon the heavenly life. It must pass through a process which entirely alters its material. Paul had seen bodies consumed to ashes, and he knew that the substance of these bodies could not be recovered. He was aware that the material of the human body is dissolved, and is by the processes of nature used for the constructing of the bodies of fishes, wild beasts, birds; that as the body was sustained in life by the produce of the earth, so in death it is mingled with the earth again, giving back to earth what it had received. The arguments therefore commonly urged against the Resurrection had no relevancy against that in which Paul believed, for it was not that very thing which was buried which he expected would rise again, but a body different in kind, in material, and in capacity.

But yet Paul always speaks as if there were some connection between the present and the future, the natural and the spiritual, body. He speaks, too, of the body of Christ as the type or specimen into the likeness of which the bodies of His people are to be transformed. Now if we conceive, or try to conceive, what passed in that closed sepulchre in the garden of Joseph, we can only suppose that the body of flesh and blood which

was taken down from the cross and laid there was transformed into a spiritual body by a process which may be called miraculous, but which differed from the process which is to operate in ourselves only by its rapidity. We do not understand the process; but is that the only thing we do not understand? All along the line which marks off this world from the spiritual world mystery broods; and the fact that we do not understand how the body Christ had worn on earth passed into a body fit for another kind of life ought not to prevent our believing that such a transmutation can take place. There are in nature many forces of which we know nothing, and it may one day appear to us most natural that the spirit should clothe itself with a spiritual body. The connection between the two bodies is the persistent and identical spirit which animates both. As the life that is in the body now assimilates material and forms the body to its particular mould, so may the spirit hereafter, when ejected from its present dwelling, have power to clothe itself with a body suited to its needs. Paul refuses to recognise any insuperable difficulty here. The transmutation of the earthly body of Christ into a glorified body will be repeated in the case of many of His followers, for, as he says, "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*"

Secondly, we must understand the position occupied by those whom Paul addressed in this chapter. They doubted the Resurrection; but in that day, as in our own, the Resurrection was denied from two opposite points of view. Materialists, such as the Sadducees, believing that mental and spiritual life are only manifestations of physical life and dependent upon it, necessarily concluded that with the death of the body the whole

life of the individual terminates. And it would rather appear as if the Corinthians were tainted with materialism. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," can only be the suggestion of the materialist, who believes in no future life of any kind.

But many who opposed materialism held that the resurrection of the body, if not impossible, was at all events undesirable. It was the fashion to speak contemptuously of the body. It was branded as the source and seat of sin, as the untamed bullock which dragged its yokefellow, the soul, out of the straight path. Philosophers gave thanks to God that He had not tied their spirit to an immortal body, and refused to allow their portrait to be taken, lest they should be remembered and honoured by means of their material part. When Paul's teaching was accepted by such persons, they laid great stress on his inculcation of the mystical or spiritual dying with Christ and rising again, until they persuaded themselves this was all he meant by resurrection. They declared that the Resurrection was past already, and that all believing men were already risen in Christ. To be free from all connection with matter was an essential element in their idea of salvation, and to promise them the resurrection of the body was to offer them a very doubtful blessing indeed.

In our own day the resurrection of Christ is denied both from the materialist and from the spiritualist or idealist point of view. It is said that the resurrection of Christ is an undoubted fact if by the resurrection it be meant that His spirit survived death and now lives in us. But the bodily resurrection is a thing of no account. Not from the risen body flows the power that has altered human history, but from the teachings

and life of Christ and from His devotement of Himself even unto death to the interests of men. Christ lay in His grave, and the elements of His body have passed into the bosom of nature, as ours will before long; but His spirit was not imprisoned in the grave: it lives, perhaps in us. Statements to this effect you may hear or read frequently in our day. And either of two very different beliefs may be expressed in such language. It may, on the one hand, mean that the person Jesus is individually extinct, and that although virtue still flows from His life, as from that of every good man, He is Himself unconscious of this and of everything else, and can exert no new and fresh influence, such as emanates from a person presently alive and aware of the exigencies appealing to His interference. This is plainly a form of belief entirely different from that of the Apostles, who acted for a living Lord, to whom they appealed and by whom they were guided. Belief in a dead Christ, who cannot hear prayer and is unconscious of our service, may indeed help a man who has nothing better to help him; but it is not the belief of the Apostles.

On the other hand, it may be meant that although the body of Christ remained in the tomb, His spirit survived death, and lives a disembodied but conscious and powerful life. One of the profoundest German critics, Keim, has expressed himself to this effect. The Apostles, he thinks, did not see the actual risen body of the Lord; their visions of a glorified Jesus were not, however, delusive; the appearances were not the creations of their own excitement, but were intentionally produced by the Lord Himself. Jesus, it is believed, had actually passed into a higher life, and was as full of consciousness and of power as He had been on

earth; and of this glorified life in which He was He gave the Apostles assurance by these appearances. The body of the Lord remained in the tomb; but these appearances were intended, to use the critic's own words, as a kind of telegram, to assure them He was alive. Had such a sign of His continued and glorified life not been given, their belief in Him as the Messiah could not have survived the death on the cross.

This view, although erroneous, can do little harm to experimental or practical Christianity. The difference between a disembodied spirit and a spiritual body is really unappreciable to our present knowledge. And if any one finds it impossible to believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, but easy to believe in His present life and power, it would only be mischievous to require of him a faith he cannot give in addition to a faith which brings him into real fellowship with Christ. The main purpose of Christ's appearances was to give to His disciples assurance of His continued life and power. If that assurance already exists, then belief in Christ as alive and supreme supersedes the use of the usual stepping-stone towards that belief.

At the same time, it must be maintained that not only did the Apostles believe they saw the body of Christ, by which indeed they first of all identified Him, but also they were distinctly assured that the body they saw was not a ghost or a telegram, but a veritable body that could stand handling, and whose lips and throat could utter sound. Besides, it is not in reason to suppose that when they saw this appearance, whatever it was, they should not at once go to the sepulchre and see what was there. And if there they saw the body while in various other places they saw what seemed to be the body, what a world of incomprehensible and

mystifying jugglery must they have felt themselves to be involved in!

It is a fact then that those who knew most both about the body and about the spirit of Jesus believed they saw the body and were encouraged so to believe. Besides, if we accept the view that though Christ is alive, His body remained in the grave, we are at once confronted with the difficulty that Christ's glorification is not yet complete. If Christ's body did not partake in His conquest over the grave, then that conquest is partial and incomplete. Human nature both in this life and in the life to come is composed of body and spirit; and if Christ now sits at God's right hand in perfected human nature, it is not as a disembodied spirit, but as a complete person in a glorified body, we must conceive of Him. No doubt it is a spiritual influence which Christ now exerts upon His followers, and their belief in His risen life may be independent of any statements made by the disciples concerning His body; at the same time, to suppose that Christ is now without a body is to suppose that He is imperfect: and it must also be remembered that the primitive faith and restored confidence in Christ, to which the very existence of the Church is due, were created by the sight of the empty tomb and the glorified body.

In the face of such chapters as this and other passages equally explicit, modern believers in a merely spiritual resurrection have found some difficulty in reconciling their views with the statements of Paul. Mr. Matthew Arnold undertakes to show us how this may be done. "Not for a moment," he says, "do we deny that in Paul's earlier theology, and notably in the Epistles to the Thessalonians and Corinthians, the physical and miraculous aspect of the Resurrection,

both Christ's and the believer's, is primary and predominant. Not for a moment do we deny that to the very end of his life, after the Epistle to the Romans, after the Epistle to the Philippians, if he had been asked whether he held the doctrine of the Resurrection in the physical and miraculous sense as well as in his own spiritual and mystical sense, he would have replied with entire conviction that he did. Very likely it would have been impossible to him to imagine his theology without it. But—

> 'Below the surface stream, shallow and light,
> Of what we *say* we feel—below the stream,
> As light, of what we *think* we feel, there flows
> With noiseless current strong, obscure and deep,
> The central stream of what we feel indeed;'

and by this alone are we truly characterised." This, however, is not to interpret an author, but to make him a mere nose of wax that can be worked into any convenient shape. Probably Paul understood his own theology quite as well as Mr. Arnold; and, as his critic says, he considered the physical resurrection of Christ and the believer an essential part of it.

Considering the place which our Lord's risen body had in Paul's conversion, it could not be otherwise. At the very moment when Paul's whole system of thought was in a state of fusion the risen Lord was pre-eminently impressed upon it. It was through his conviction of the resurrection of Christ that both Paul's theology and his character were once for all radically altered. The idea of a crucified Messiah had been abhorrent to him, and his life was dedicated to the extirpation of this vile heresy that sprang from the Cross. But from the moment when with his own eyes he saw the risen Lord he understood, with the rest of

the disciples, that death was the Messiah's appointed path to supreme spiritual headship. As truly in Paul's case as in that of the other disciples faith sprang from the sight of the glorified Christ; and to none could it be so inevitable as to him to say, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." From the first Paul had put the resurrection of Christ forward as an essential and fundamental part of the Gospel he had received, and which he was accustomed to deliver.

And, generally speaking, this place is assigned to it both by believers and by unbelievers. It is recognised that it was the belief in the Resurrection which first revived the hopes of Christ's followers and drew them together to wait for the promise of His Spirit. It is recognised that whether the Resurrection be a fact or no, the Church of Christ was founded on the belief that it had taken place, so that if that had been removed the Church could not have been. This is affirmed as decisively by unbelievers as by believers. The great leader of modern unbelief (Strauss) declares that the Resurrection is "the centre of the centre, the real heart of Christianity as it has been until now;" while one of his ablest opponents says, "The Resurrection created the Church, the risen Christ made Christianity; and even now the Christian faith stands or falls with Him. . . . If it be true that no living Christ ever issued from the tomb of Joseph, then that tomb becomes the grave, not of a man, but of a religion, with all the hopes built on it and all the splendid enthusiasms it has inspired" (Fairbairn).

It is not difficult to perceive what it was in the resurrection of Christ which gave it this importance.

1. First, it was the convincing proof that Christ's

words were true, and that He was what He had claimed to be. He Himself had on more occasions than one hinted that such proof was to be given. "Destroy this temple," He said, "and in three days I will raise it again." The sign which was to be given, notwithstanding His habitual refusal to yield to the Jewish craving for miracle, was the sign of the prophet Jonah. As he had been thrown out and lost for three days and nights, but had thereby only been forwarded in his mission, so our Lord was to be thrown out as endangering the ship, but was to rise again to fuller and more perfect efficiency. In order that His claim to be the Messiah might be understood, it was necessary that He should die; but in order that it might be believed, it was needful that He should rise. Had He not died, His followers would have continued to expect a reign of earthly power; His death showed them no such reign could be, and convinced them His spiritual power sprang out of apparent weakness. But had He not risen again, all their hopes would have been blighted. All who had believed in Him would have joined with the Emmaus disciples in their hopeless cry, "We thought that this had been He who should have redeemed Israel."

It was the resurrection of our Lord, then, which convinced His disciples that His words had been true, that He was what He had claimed to be, and that He was not mistaken regarding His own person, His work, His relation to the Father, the prospects of Himself and His people. This was the answer given by God to the doubts, and calumnies, and accusations of men. Jesus at the last had stood alone, unsupported by one favouring voice. His own disciples forsook Him, and in their bewilderment knew not what to think. Those who

considered Him a dangerous and seditious person or at best a crazed enthusiast found themselves backed by the voice of the people and urged to extreme measures, with none to remonstrate save the heathen judge, none to pity save a few women. This delusion, they congratulated themselves, was stamped out. And stamped out it would have been but for the Resurrection. "Then it was seen that while the world had scorned the Son of God, the Father had been watching over Him with unceasing love; that while the world had placed Him at its bar as a malefactor and blasphemer, the Father had been making ready for Him a seat at His own right hand; that while the world nailed Him to the cross, the Father had been preparing for Him 'many crowns' and a name that is above every name; that while the world had gone to the grave in the garden, setting a watch and sealing the stone, and had then returned to its feasting and merriment, because the Preacher of righteousness was no longer there to trouble it, the Father had waited for the third morning in order to bring Him forth in triumph from the grave."[1]

This contrast between the treatment Christ received at the hands of men and His justification by the Father in the Resurrection fills and colours all the addresses delivered by the Apostles to the people in the immediately succeeding days. They evidently accepted the Resurrection as God's great attestation to the person and work of Christ. It changed their own thoughts about Him, and they expected it would change the thoughts of other men. They saw now that His death was one of the necessary steps in His career, one of the essential parts of the work He had come to do.

[1] Milligan, *The Resurrection of our Lord*, p. 150.

Had Christ not been raised, they would have thought Him weak and mistaken as other men. The beauty and promise of His words which had so attracted them would now have seemed delusive and unbearable. But in the light of the Resurrection they saw that the Christ "ought to have suffered these things and so to enter His glory." They could now confidently say, "He died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification."

2. Secondly, the resurrection of Christ occupies a fundamental place in the Christian creed, because by it there is disclosed a real and close connection between this world and the unseen, eternal world. There is no need now of argument to prove a life beyond; here is one who is in it. For the resurrection of Christ was not a return to this life, to its wants, to its limitations, to its inevitable close; but it was a resurrection to a life for ever beyond death. Neither was it a discarding of humanity on Christ's part, a cessation of His acceptance of human conditions, a rising to some kind of existence to which man has no access. On the contrary, it was because He continued truly human that in human body and with human soul He rose to veritable human life beyond the grave. If Jesus rose from the dead, then the world into which He is gone is a real world, in which men can live more fully than they live here. If He rose from the dead, then there is an unseen Spirit mightier than the strongest material powers, a God who is seeking to bring us out of all evil into an eternally happy condition. Quite reasonably is death invested with a certain majesty, if not terror, as the mightiest of physical things. There may be greater evils; but they do not affect all men, but only some, or they debar men from certain enjoyments and

a certain kind of life, but not from all. But death shuts men out from everything with which they have here to do, and launches them into a condition of which they know absolutely nothing. Any one who conquers death and scatters its mystery, who shows in his own person that it is innocuous, and that it actually betters our condition, brings us light that reaches us from no other quarter. And He who shows this superiority over death in virtue of a moral superiority, and uses it for the furtherance of the highest spiritual ends, shows a command over the whole affairs of men which makes it easy to believe He can guide us into a condition like His own. As Peter affirms, it is "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead we are begotten again unto a lively hope."

3. For, lastly, it is in the resurrection of Christ we see at once the norm or type of our life here and of our destiny hereafter. Holiness and immortality are two aspects, two manifestations, of the Divine life we receive from Christ. They are inseparable the one from the other. His Spirit is the source of both. "If the Spirit that raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you." If we have now the one evidence of His indwelling in us, we shall one day have the other. The hope that should uplift and purify every part of the Christian's character is a hope which is shadowy, unreal, inoperative, in those who merely know about Christ and His work; it becomes a living hope, full of immortality, in all who are now actually drawing their life from Christ, who have their life truly hid with Christ in God, who are in heart and will one with the Most High, in whom is all life.

Therefore does Paul so continually hold up to us the risen life of Christ as that to which we are to be conformed. We are to rise with Him to newness of life. As Christ has done with death, having died to sin once, so must His people be dead to sin and live to God with Him. Sometimes in weariness or dejection one feels as if he had seen the best of everything experienced all he can experience, and must now simply endure life; he sees no prospect of anything fresh, or attractive, or reviving. But this is not because he has exhausted life, but because he has not begun it. To the "children of the Resurrection," who have followed Christ in His path to life by renouncing sin, and conquering self, and giving themselves to God, there is a springing life in their own soul that renews hope and energy.

XXII.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST (continued).

II. Its Proof.

PAUL, having affirmed that the resurrection of Christ is an essential element of the Gospel, proceeds to sketch the evidence for the fact. That evidence mainly consists in the attestation of those who at various times and in various places and circumstances had seen the Lord after His death. Other evidence there is, as Paul indicates. In certain unspecified passages of the Old Testament he thinks a discerning reader might have found sufficient intimation that when the Messiah came He would both die and rise again. But as he himself had not at first recognised these intimations in the Old Testament, he does not press them upon others, but appeals to the simple fact that many of those who had been familiar with the appearance of Christ while He lived saw Him after death alive.

As a preliminary to the positive evidence here adduced by Paul, it may be remarked that we have no record of any contemporary denial of the fact, save only the story put in the mouths of the soldiers by the chief priests. Matthew tells us that it was currently reported that the soldiers who had been on guard at the sepulchre were bribed by the priests and elders to

say that the disciples had come in the night and stolen the body. But whatever temporary purpose they fancied this might serve, the great purpose it now serves is to prove the truth of the Resurrection, for the main point is admitted, the tomb was empty. As for the story itself, its falsehood must have been apparent; and probably no one in Jerusalem was so simple as to be taken in by it. For, in point of fact, the authorities had taken steps to prevent this very thing. They were resolved there should be no tampering with the grave, and accordingly had set their official seal upon it and placed a guard to watch.

The evidence thus unintentionally furnished by the authorities is important. Their action after the Resurrection proves that the tomb was empty; while their action previous to the Resurrection proves that it was emptied by no ordinary interposition, but by the actual rising of Jesus from the dead. So beyond doubt was this that when Peter stood before the Sanhedrim and affirmed it no one was hardy enough to contradict him. Had they been able to persuade themselves that the disciples had tampered with the guard, or overpowered them, or terrified them in the night by strange appearances, why did they not prosecute the disciples for breaking the official seal? Could they have had a more plausible pretext for exploding the Christian faith and stamping out the nascent heresy? They were perplexed and alarmed at the growth of the Church; what hindered them from bringing proof that there had been no resurrection? They had every inducement to do so, yet they did not. If the body was still in the grave, nothing was easier than to produce it; if the grave was empty, as they affirmed, because the disciples had stolen the body, no more welcome handle against

them could have been furnished to the authorities. But they could not in open court pretend any such thing. They knew that what their guard reported was true. In short, there was no object the Sanhedrim would more gladly have compassed than to explode the belief in the resurrection of Christ; if that belief was false, they had ample means of showing it to be so: and yet they did absolutely nothing that had any weight with the public mind. It is apparent that not only the disciples, but the authorities, were compelled to admit the fact of the Resurrection.

The idea that there was only a pretended resurrection, vamped up by the disciples, may therefore be dismissed; and indeed no well-informed person nowadays would venture to affirm such a thing. It is admitted by those who deny the Resurrection as explicitly as by those who affirm it that the disciples had a *bonâ fide* belief that Jesus had risen from the dead and was alive. The only question is, How was that belief produced? And to this question there are three answers: (1) that the disciples saw our Lord alive after the Crucifixion, but He had never been dead; (2) that they only thought they saw Him; and (3) that they did actually see Him alive after being dead and buried.

1. The first answer is plainly inadequate. We are asked to account for the Christian Church, for the belief in a risen Lord which animated the first disciples with a faith, a hope, a courage, whose power is felt to this day; we ask for an explanation of this singular circumstance that a number of men arrived at the conclusion that they had an almighty Friend, One who had all power in heaven and on earth; and we are told, in explanation of this, that they had seen their Master barely rescued from crucifixion, creeping about

the earth, scarcely able to move, all stained with blood, soiled from the tomb, pale, weak, helpless, and this object caused them to believe He was almighty. As one of the most sceptical of critics himself says, "one who had thus crept forth half dead from the grave and crawled about a sickly patient, needing medical and surgical assistance, nursing and strengthening, and who finally succumbed to his sufferings, could never have given his followers the impression that he was the Conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of life. Such a recovery could only have weakened or at best given a pathetic tinge to the impression which he had made upon them by his life and death; it could not possibly have changed their sorrow into ecstasy, and raised their reverence into worship."

This explanation then may be dismissed. It is neither in harmony with the facts, nor is it adequate as an explanation.

It is not in harmony with the facts, because the fact of His death was certified by the surest authority. There was in the world at that time, and there is in the world now, nothing more punctiliously accurate than a soldier trained under the old Roman discipline. The punctilious exactness of this discipline is seen in the conduct both of the soldiers at the cross and of Pilate. Though the soldiers see that Jesus is dead, they make sure of His death by a spear-thrust, a hand-breadth wide, sufficient of itself, as they very well knew, to cause death. And when Pilate is applied to for the body, he will not give it up until he has received from the centurion on duty the necessary certificate that the sentence of death has actually been executed.

Neither is the supposition that Jesus survived the Crucifixion and appeared to His disciples in this rescued

condition any explanation of their faith in Him as a risen, glorious, almighty Lord. The Person they saw and afterwards believed in was not a bleeding, crushed, defeated man, who had death still to look forward to, but a Person who had passed through and conquered death, and was now alive for evermore, opening for Himself and to them the gates of a glorious and deathless life.

2. The belief of the disciples is explained with greater appearance of insight by those who say that they imagined they saw the risen Lord, although in reality they did not. There are, it is pointed out, several ways in which the disciples may have been deceived. For example, some clever and scheming person may have personated Jesus. Such personations have been made, but never with such results. When Postumus Agrippa was killed, one of his slaves secreted or dispersed the ashes of the murdered man, to destroy the evidence of his death, and retired for a time till his hair and beard were grown, to favour a certain likeness which he actually bore him. Meanwhile, taking a few intimates into his confidence, he spread a report, which found ready listeners, that Agrippa still lived. He glided from town to town, showing himself in the dusk for a few minutes only at a time to men prepared for the sudden apparition, until it came to be noised abroad that the gods had saved the grandson of Agrippa from the fate intended for him, and that he was about to visit the city and claim his rightful inheritance. But no sooner did the vulgar imposture take this practical shape and come into contact with the realities of life than the whole trick exploded. Imposture, in fact, does not fit the case before us at all; and the more we consider the combina-

tion of qualities required in any one who could undertake to personate the risen Lord, the more we shall be persuaded that the right explanation of the belief in the Resurrection is not to be sought in this direction.

Again, one of the most reasonable and influential of our contemporaries ascribes "the great myth of Christ's bodily revival to the belief on the part of the disciples that such a soul could not become extinct. In a lesser way the grave of a beloved friend has been to many a man the birthplace of his faith; and it is obvious that in the case of Christ every condition was fulfilled which would raise such sudden conviction to the height of passionate fervour. The first words of the disciples to one another on that Easter morn may well have been 'He is not dead. His spirit is this day in paradise among the sons of God.'" Quite so; they of course believed that His spirit was in paradise, and for that very reason fully expected to find His body in the tomb. No ordinary visit to a grave, nor any ordinary results flowing from such a visit, throw light on the case before us, because in ordinary circumstances sane men do not believe that their friends are restored to them, and are standing in bodily palpable shape before them. There is no likelihood whatever that their belief in the continued existence of their Master's spirit should have given rise to the conviction that they had seen Him. It might have given rise to such expressions as that He would be with them to the end of the world, but not to the conviction that they had seen Him in the body.

Here, again, is Rénan's account of the growth of this belief: "To Jesus was to happen the same fortune which is the lot of all men who have riveted the attention of their fellow-men. The world, accustomed

to attribute to them superhuman virtues, cannot admit that they have submitted to the unjust, revolting, iniquitous law of the death common to all. At the moment in which Mahomet expired Omar rushed from the tent, sword in hand, and declared that he would hew down any one who should dare to say that the prophet was no more. . . . Heroes do not die. What is true existence but the recollection of us which survives in the hearts of those who love us? For some years this adored Master had filled the little world by which He was surrounded with joy and hope; could they consent to allow Him to the decay of the tomb? No; He had lived so entirely in those who surrounded Him, that they could but affirm that after His death He was still living." M. Rénan is careful not to remind us that the uproar occasioned by Omar's announcement was stilled by the calm voice of Abu Bekr, who also came forth from the deathbed of Mahomet with the memorable words, "Whoso hath worshipped Mahomet, let him know that Mahomet is dead, but whoso hath worshipped God that the Lord liveth and doth not die." The great critic omits also to notice that none of the Apostles said, like Omar, that their Master was not dead; they admitted and felt His death keenly; and it is vain to attempt to confound things essentially distinct, the assertion of a matter of fact, viz., that the Lord had risen again, with the sentimental or regretful resuscitation of a man's image in the hearts of his surviving friends.

Besides, it should be observed that all these hypotheses which explain the belief in the Resurrection by supposing that the disciples imagined they had seen Christ, or persuaded themselves that He still lived, omit altogether to explain how they disposed of the

tomb of our Lord, in which, according to this hypothesis, His body was still quietly reposing. One or two persons in a peculiarly excitable state might suppose they had seen a figure resembling a person about whom they were concerned; but how the belief that the tomb was empty could take any hold on them or on the thousands who must have visited it in the succeeding weeks is not explained, nor is any attempt made to explain it.

Is there then no possibility of the disciples having been deceived? May they not have been mistaken? May they not have seen what they wished to see, as other men have sometimes done? Men of vivid fancy or of a boastful spirit sometimes come really to believe they have done and said things they never did or said. Is it out of the question to imagine that the disciples may have been similarly misled? Had the belief in the Resurrection depended on the report of one man, had there been only one or a few eyewitnesses of the matter, their evidence might have been explained away on this ground. It is possible, of course, that one or two persons who were anxiously looking for the resurrection of Jesus might have persuaded themselves they saw Him, might persuade themselves that some distant figure or some gleam of morning sunshine among the trees of the garden was the looked-for person. It requires no profound psychological knowledge to teach us that occasionally visions are seen. But what we have here to explain is how not one but several persons, not together but in different places and at different times, not all in one mood of mind but in various moods, came to believe they had seen the risen Lord. He was recognised, not by persons who expected to see Him alive, but by women who went to anoint

Him dead; not by credulous, excitable persons, but by men who would not believe till they had gone to and into the sepulchre; not by persons so enthusiastic and creative of their own belief as to mistake any passing stranger or even a gleam of light for Him they sought, but so slow to believe, so scornfully incredulous of resurrection, so resolutely sceptical and so keenly alive to the possibility of delusion, that they vowed nothing would satisfy them but the test of touch and sight. It was a belief produced, not by one extraordinary and doubtful appearance, but by repeated and prolonged appearances to persons in various places and of various temperaments.

This supposition, therefore, that the disciples were prepared to believe in the Resurrection and wished to believe it, and that what they wished to see they thought they saw, must be given up. It has never been shown that the disciples *had* such a belief; it formed no part of the Jewish creed regarding the Messiah: and the idea that they actually were in this expectant state of mind is thoroughly contradicted by the narrative. So far from being hopeful, they were sad and gloomy, as witness the melancholy, resigned despair of the two friends on the road to Emmaus.

> "It is a woe 'too deep for tears' when all
> Is reft at once, when some surpassing spirit,
> Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves
> Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,
> But pale despair and cold tranquillity."

Such was the state of mind of the bereft disciples. They thought all was over. The women who went with their spices to anoint the dead—*they* certainly were not expecting to find their Lord risen. The men to whom they announced what they had seen were

sceptical; some of them laughed at the women, and called their report "idle tales," and would not believe. Mary Magdalene was so little expecting to see her Lord alive again that when He did appear to her she thought He was the gardener, the *only* person she dreamt of seeing going about at that hour in the garden. Thomas, with all the resolute distrust of others which a modern sceptic could show, vows he will believe such a wild imagination on no man's word, and unless he sees the Lord with his own eyes and is allowed to test the reality of the figure by touch as well, he will not be convinced. To the disciples on the way to Emmaus, though they had never heard such conversation before as that of the Person who joined them, it never once occurred that this could be the Lord. In short, there was not one person to whom our Lord appeared who was not taken wholly by surprise. So far were they from depicting the Resurrection in their hopes and fancies with such vividness as to make it seem to take outward shape and reality, that even when it did actually take place they could scarcely believe it on the strongest evidence. We are compelled, therefore, to dismiss the idea that the first disciples believed in the resurrection because they wished to do so and were prepared to do so.

3. There remains, therefore, only the third explanation of the disciples' belief in the Resurrection: they did see Him alive after He had been dead and buried. Plainly it was no phantom, or ghost, or imaginary appearance which could personate their lost Master and rouse them from the despondency, and inaction, and timidity of disappointed hopes to the calmest consistency of plan and the firmest courage. It was no vision created by their own imagination which could at

once and for ever alter the idea of the Messiah which the disciples, in common with all their countrymen, held. It was no phantom who could imitate the impressive individuality of the Lord and continue His identity into new scenes, who could inspire the disciples with unity of purpose, and who could lead them forward to the most splendid victories men have ever won. No; nothing will explain the faith of the Apostles and of the rest but the fact of their really seeing the Lord after His death clothed in power. The men who said they had seen Him were men of probity; they were men who showed themselves worthy of being witnesses to so great an event; men animated by no paltry spirit of vainglory, but by seriousness, even sublimity, of mind; men whose lives and conduct require an explanation, and which are explained by their having been brought in contact with the spiritual world in this surprising and solemnizing manner.

The testimony of Paul himself is in some respects more convincing than that of those who saw the Lord immediately after the Resurrection. Certainly he was neither anxious to believe nor likely to be ignorant of the facts. He had devoted himself to the extermination of the new faith; all his hopes as a Pharisee and as a Jew were banded against it. He had the best means of ascertaining the truth, living on terms of friendship with the leading men in Jerusalem. It is simply inconceivable that he should have abandoned all his prospects and entered on a wholly different life without carefully investigating the chief fact which influenced him in making this change. It is of course said that Paul was a nervous, excitable creature, probably epileptic, and certainly liable to see visions. It is insinuated that his conversion was due to the com-

bined influence of epilepsy and a thunderstorm—of all the unlucky suggestions of modern scepticism perhaps the unluckiest. Were it true, one could only wish epilepsy commoner than it is. We have to account not only for Paul's conversion, but for his abiding by the convictions at first produced in him. It is out of the question to suppose that he did not spend much of the immediately succeeding years in examining the grounds of the Christian faith and in questioning himself as to his own belief. Paul was no doubt eager and enthusiastic, but no man was ever better fitted to move among the realities of life or to ascertain what these realities are. Englishmen regard Paley as one of the best representatives of the combined acuteness and sense, penetration and solidity of judgment, by which English judges are supposed to be characterized; and Paley says of Paul, "His letters furnish evidence of the soundness and sobriety of his judgment, and his morality is everywhere calm, pure, and rational; adapted to the condition, the activity, and the business of social life and of its various relations; free from the overscrupulousness and austerities of superstition, and from what was more perhaps to be apprehended, the abstractions of quietism and the soarings and extravagances of fanaticism." But really no person of ordinary capacity needs certificates of Paul's sanity. No saner or more commanding intellect ever headed a complex and difficult movement. There is no one of that generation whose testimony to the Resurrection is more worth having, and we have it in the most emphatic form of a life based upon it.

No one, so far as I know, who has taken a serious interest in the evidence adduced for this event, has denied that it would be quite sufficient to authenticate

any ordinary historical event. In point of fact, the majority of the events of past history are accepted on much slenderer evidence than that which we have for the Resurrection. The evidence we have for it is of precisely the same kind as that on which we accept ordinary events; it is the testimony of the persons concerned, the simple statements of eyewitnesses and of those who were acquainted with eyewitnesses. It is not a prophetical, or poetical, or symbolical, or supernatural statement, but the plain and unvarnished testimony of ordinary men. The accounts vary in many particulars, but as to the central fact that the Lord rose and was seen over and over again there is no variation, and such variations as there are are merely such as exist in all similar accounts by different individuals of one and the same event. In short, the evidence can be refused only on the ground that no evidence, however strong, could prove such an incredible event. It is admitted that the evidence would be accepted in any other case, but this reported event is in itself incredible. The idea of any interference with the physical laws which rule the world, no matter how important an end is to be served by the interference, is rejected as out of the question. This seems to me quite an illogical method of dealing with the subject. The supernatural is rejected as a preliminary, so as to bar any consideration of the most appropriate evidences of the supernatural. Before looking at that which, if not the most effective proof of the supernatural, is at least among those arguments which chiefly deserve attention, the mind is made up to reject all evidence of the supernatural.

The first business of scientific men is to look at facts. Many facts which at first sight seemed to contradict

previously ascertained laws were ultimately found to indicate the presence of a higher law. Why are men of science so terrified by the word "miracle"? This event may, like the visit of a comet, have occurred only once in the world's history; but it need not on that account be irreducible to law or to reason. The resurrection of Christ is unique, because He is unique. Find another Person bearing the same relation to the race and living the same life, and you will find a similar resurrection. To say that it is unusual or unprecedented is to say nothing at all to the purpose.

Besides, those who reject the resurrection of Christ as impossible are compelled to accept an equally astounding moral miracle—the miracle, I mean, that those who had the best means of ascertaining the truth and every possible inducement to ascertain it should all have been deceived, and that this deception should have been the most fruitful source of good, not only to them, but to the whole world.

We are brought then to the conclusion that the disciples believed in the resurrection of Christ because it had actually taken place. No other account of their belief has ever been given which commends itself to the common understanding which accepts what appeals to it. No account of the belief has been given which is at all likely to gain currency or which is more credible than that which it seeks to supplant. The belief in the Resurrection which so suddenly and effectively possessed the first disciples remains unexplained by any other supposition than the simple one that the Lord did rise again.

CONSEQUENCES OF DENYING RESURRECTION.

"Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame."—1 Cor. xv. 12-34

XXIII.

CONSEQUENCES OF DENYING RESURRECTION.

IN endeavouring to restore among the Corinthians the belief in the resurrection of the body, Paul shows the fundamental place occupied in the Christian creed by the resurrection of Christ, and what attestation His resurrection had received. He further exhibits certain consequences which flow from denial of the resurrection. These consequences are (1) that if there is no resurrection of the body, then Christ is not risen, and that, therefore, (2) the Apostles who witnessed to that resurrection are false witnesses; (3) that those who had already died believing in Christ, had perished, and that our hope in Christ must be confined to this life; (4) that baptism for the dead is a vain folly if the dead rise not. To the statement and discussion of these consequences Paul devotes a large part of this chapter, from verse 12 to verse 34. Let us take the least important consequence first.

1. "If the dead rise not at all, what shall they do who are baptized for the dead?" (ver. 29)—an enquiry of which the Corinthians no doubt felt the full force, but which is rather lost upon us because we do not know what it means. Some have thought that as baptism is sometimes used in Scripture as equivalent to immersion in a sea of troubles, Paul means to ask,

"What shall they do, what hope have they, who are plunged in grief for the friends they have lost?" Some think it refers to those who have been baptized with Christ's baptism, that is to say, have suffered martyrdom and so entered into the Church of the dead. Others again think, that to be baptized "for the dead" means no more than ordinary baptism, in which the believer looks forward to the resurrection from the dead. The primitive form of baptism brought death and the resurrection vividly before the believer's mind, and confirmed his hope in the resurrection, which hope was vain if there is no resurrection.

The plain meaning of the words, however, seems to point to a vicarious baptism, in which a living friend received baptism as a proxy for a person who had died without baptism. Of such a custom there is historical trace. Even before the Christian era, among the Jews when a man died in a state of ceremonial defilement it was customary for a friend of the deceased to perform in his stead the washings and other rites which the dead man would have performed had he recovered. A similar practice prevailed to some small extent among the primitive Christians, although it was never admitted as a valid rite by the Church Catholic. Then, as now, it sometimes happened that on the approach of death the thoughts of unbelieving persons were strongly turned towards the Christian faith, but before baptism could be administered death cut down the intending Christian. Baptism was generally postponed until youth or even middle life was passed, in order that a large number of sins might be washed away in baptism, or that fewer might stain the soul after it. But naturally miscalculations sometimes occurred, and sudden death anticipated a long-delayed baptism. In such cases the

friends of the deceased derived consolation from vicarious baptism. Some one who was persuaded of the faith of the departed answered for him and was baptized in his stead.

If Paul meant to say, On the supposition that death ends all, what is the use of any one being baptized as proxy for a dead friend? he could not have used words more expressive of his meaning than when he says, "If the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for the dead?" The only difficulty is, that Paul might thus seem to draw an argument for a fundamental doctrine of Christianity from a foolish and unjustifiable practice. Is it possible that a man of such sagacity can have sanctioned or countenanced so absurd a superstition? But his alluding to this custom in the way he here does, scarcely implies that he approved of it. He rather differentiates himself from those who practised the rite. "What shall *they* do who are baptized for the dead?"—referring, probably, to some of the Corinthians themselves. In any case, the point of the argument is obvious. To be baptized for those who had died without baptism, and whose future was supposed thereby to be jeopardized, had at least a show of friendliness and reason; to be baptized for those who had already passed out of existence was of course, on the face of it, absurd.

2. The second consequence which flows from the denial of the resurrection is, that Paul's own life is a mistake. "Why stand we in jeopardy every hour? What advantageth it me to risk death daily, and to suffer daily, if the dead rise not?" If there is no resurrection, he says, my whole life is a folly. No day passes but I am in danger of death at the hands either of an infuriated mob or a mistaken magistrate. I am

in constant jeopardy, in perils by land and sea, in perils of robbers, in nakedness, in fasting; all these dangers I gladly encounter because I believe in the resurrection. But "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, then we are of all men most miserable." We lose both this life and that which we thought was to come.

Paul's meaning is plain. By the hope of a life beyond, he had been induced to undergo the greatest privations in this life. He had been exposed to countless dangers and indignities. Although a Roman citizen, he had been cast into the arena to contend with wild beasts: there was no risk he had not run, no hardship he had not endured. But in all he was sustained by the assurance that there remained for him a rest and an inheritance in a future life. Remove this assurance and you remove the assumption on which his conduct is wholly built. If there is no future life either to win or to lose, then the Epicurean motto may take the place of Christ's promises, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

It may indeed be said that even if there be no life to come, this life is best spent in the service of man, however full of hazard and hardship that service be. That is quite true; and had Paul believed this life was all, he might still have chosen to spend it, not on sensual indulgence, but in striving to win men to something better. But in that case there would have been no deception and no disappointment. In point of fact, however, Paul believed in a life to come, and it was because he believed in that life he gave himself to the work of winning men to Christ regardless of his own pains and losses. And what he says is that if he is mistaken, then all these pains and losses have been gratuitous, and that his whole life has proceeded on a

mistake. The life to which he sought to win and for which he sought to prepare men does not exist.

Besides, it must be acknowledged that the mass of men do sink to a merely sensual or earthly life if the hope of immortality is removed, and that Paul did not require to be very guarded in his statement of this truth. In fact, the words "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" were taken from the history of his own nation. When Jerusalem was besieged by the Babylonians and no escape seemed possible, the people gave themselves up to recklessness and despair and sensual indulgence, saying, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Similar instances of the recklessness produced by the near approach of death may very readily be culled from the history of shipwrecks, of pestilences, and of besieged cities. In the old Jewish book, the Book of Wisdom, it finds a very beautiful expression, the following words being put into the mouth of those who knew not that man is immortal: "Our life is short and tedious, and in the death of man is no remedy; neither was any man ever known to return from the grave: for we are all born at an adventure, and shall be afterwards as though we had never been; for the breath of our nostrils is as smoke, and a little spark is the moving of our heart, which, being extinguished, our bodies will be burnt to ashes, and our spirit vanish as the soft air: and our name shall be forgotten in time, and no man shall hold our works in remembrance, and our life shall pass away like the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a mist that is driven away with the beams of the sun, and overcome with the heat thereof. . . . Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth.

Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by us; let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered; let none of us go without his share of voluptuousness; let us leave tokens of our joyfulness in every place, for this is our portion and our lot is this."

It is obvious therefore that this is the conclusion which the mass of mankind draw from a disbelief in immortality. Convince men that this life is all, that death is final extinction, and they will eagerly drain this life of all the pleasure it can yield. We may say that there are some men to whom virtue is the greatest pleasure: we may say that to all the denial of appetite and self-indulgence is a more genuine pleasure than the gratification of it: we may say that virtue is its own reward, and that irrespective of the future it is right to live now spiritually and not sensually, for God and not for self: we may say that the judgments of conscience are pronounced without any regard to future consequences, and that the highest and best life for man is a life in conformity to conscience and in fellowship with God, whether such life is to be long or short, temporal or eternal. And this is true, but how are we to get men to accept it? Teach men to believe in a future life and you strengthen every moral sentiment and every Godward aspiration by revealing the true dignity of human nature. Make men feel that they are immortal beings, that this life, so far from being all, is the mere entrance and first step to existence; make men feel that there is open to them an endless moral progress, and you give them some encouragement to lay the foundations of this progress in a self-denying and virtuous life in this world. Take away this belief, encourage men to think

of themselves as worthless little creatures that come into being for a few years and are blotted out again for ever, and you destroy one mainspring of right action in men. It is not that men do noble deeds for the sake of reward: the hope of reward is scarcely a perceptible influence in the best of men, or indeed in any men; but in all men trained as we are, there is an indefinite consciousness that, being immortal creatures, we are made for higher ends than those of this life, and have prospects of enjoyments which should make us independent of the grosser pleasures of the present bodily condition.

Apparently the Corinthians themselves had argued that morality was quite independent of a belief in immortality. For Paul goes on: "Be not deceived: you cannot, however much you may think so, you *cannot* hear such theories without having your moral convictions undermined and your tone lowered. This he conveys to them in a common quotation from a heathen poet—"Evil communications corrupt good manners;" that is to say, false opinions have a natural tendency to produce unsatisfactory and immoral conduct. To keep company with those whose conversation is frivolous or cynical, or charged with dangerous or false views of things, has a natural tendency to lead us to a style of conduct we should not otherwise have fallen into. Men do not always recognise this; they need the warning, "Be not deceived." The beginnings of conduct are so hidden from our observation, our lives are formed by influences so imperceptible, what we hear sinks so insidiously into the mind and mingles so insensibly with our motives, that we can never say *what* we have heard without moral contamination. No doubt it is possible to hold the most erroneous opinions

and yet to keep the life pure; but they are strong and guileless spirits who can preserve a high moral tone while they have lost faith in those truths which mainly nourish the moral nature of the mass of men And many have found to their surprise and grief that opinions which they fancied they might very well hold and yet live a high and holy life, have somehow sapped their moral defences against temptation and paved the way for shameful falls. We cannot always prevent doubts, even about the most fundamental truths, from entering our minds, but we can always refuse to welcome such doubts, or to be proud of them; we can always be resolved to treat sacred things in a reverent and not in a flippant spirit, and we can always aim at least at an honest and eager seeking for the truth.

3. But the most serious consequence which results if there be no resurrection of the dead, is that in that case Christ is not risen. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.' For Paul refused to consider the resurrection of Christ as a miracle in the sense of its being exceptional and aside from the usual experience of man. On the contrary, he accepts it as the type to which every man is to be conformed. Precedent in time, exceptional possibly in some of its accidental accompaniments, the resurrection of Christ may be, but nevertheless as truly in the line of human development as birth, and growth, and death. Christ being man must submit to the conditions and experience of men in all essentials, in all that characterises man as human. And, therefore, if resurrection be not a normal human experience, Christ has not risen. The time at which resurrection takes place, and the interval elapsing between death and resurrection, Paul makes nothing of. A child may live but three days, but it is not on that

account any the less human than if he had lived his threescore years and ten. Similarly the fact of Christ's resurrection identifies Him with the human race, while the shortness of the interval elapsing between death and resurrection does not separate Him from man, for in point of fact the interval will be less in the case of many.

Both here and elsewhere Paul looks upon Christ as the representative man, the one in whom we can see the ideal of manhood. If any of our own friends should veritably die, and after death should appear to us alive, and should prove his identity by remaining with us for a time, by showing an interest in the very things which had previously occupied his thought, and by taking practical steps to secure the fulfilment of his purposes, a strong probability that we too should live through death would inevitably be impressed on our mind. But when Christ rises from the dead this probability becomes a certainty, because He is the type of humanity, the representative person. As Paul here says, "He is the firstfruits of them that sleep." His resurrection is the sample and pledge of ours. When the farmer pulls the first ripe ears of wheat and carries them home, it is not for their own sake he values them, but because they are a specimen and sample of the whole crop; and when God raised Christ from the dead, the glory of the event consisted in its being a pledge and specimen of the triumph of mankind over death. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

And yet while Paul distinctly holds that resurrection is a normal human experience, he also implies that but for the interposition of Christ that experience might

have been lost to men. It is in Christ that men are made alive after and through death. As Adam is the source of physical life that ends in death, so Christ is the source of spiritual life that never dies. "By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." Adam's severance from God and preference of what was physical, brought man under the powers of the physical world: Christ by perfect adhesion to God, and constant conquest of all physical allurements, won life eternal for Himself and for those who have His Spirit. As a man of genius and wisdom will by his occupation of a throne enlarge men's ideas of what a king is, and bring many blessings to his subjects, so Christ by living a human life enlarged it to its utmost dimensions, compelling it to express His ideas of life, and winning for those who follow Him entrance into a larger and higher condition. Resurrection is here represented, not as an experience which men would have enjoyed had Christ never appeared on earth, nor as an experience opened to men by God's sovereign goodwill, but as an experience in some way brought by Christ within human reach. "By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." That is to say, all who are by physical derivation truly united to Adam, incur the death which by sinning he introduced into human experience; and similarly all who by spiritual affinity are in Christ, enjoy the new life which triumphs over death, and which He won. Adam was not the only man who died, but the firstfruits of a rich harvest; and so, Christ is not alone in resurrection, but is become the firstfruits of them that sleep. According to Paul's theology, the conduct of a man, the sin of Adam, carried

in it disastrous consequences to all connected with him: but equally fruitful in consequences was the human life, death, and resurrection of Christ. The death of Adam was the first stroke of that funeral knell that has ceaselessly sounded through all generations: but the resurrection of Christ was equally the pledge and earnest that the same experience would be enjoyed by all "that are Christ's."

Paul is carried on from the thought of the resurrection of "them that are Christ's," to the thought of the consummation of all things which this great event introduces and signalizes. This exhibition of the triumph over death is the signal that all other enemies are now defeated. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;" and this being destroyed, all Christ's followers being now gathered in and having entered on their eternal condition, the work of Christ so far as this world is concerned is over. Having reunited men to God, His work is done. The provisional government administered by Him having accomplished its work of bringing men into perfect harmony with the Supreme Will, it gives place to the immediate and direct government of God. What is implied in this it is impossible to say. A condition in which sin shall have no place and in which there shall be no need of means of reconciliation, a condition in which the work of Christ shall be no longer needed and in which God shall be all in all, pervading with His presence every soul and as welcome and natural as the air or the sunlight,—that is a condition not easy to be imagined. Neither can we readily imagine what Christ Himself shall be and do when the term of His mediatorial administration is finished and God is all in all.

One idea conspicuous in this brief and pregnant passage is that Christ came to subdue all the enemies of mankind, and that He will continue His work until His purpose is accomplished. He alone has taken a perfectly comprehensive view of the obstacles to human happiness and progress, and He has set Himself to remove these. He alone has penetrated to the root of all human evil and misery, and has given Himself to the task of emancipating men from all evil, of restoring men to their true life, and of abolishing for ever the miseries which have so largely characterised man's history. Slowly indeed, and unseen, does His work proceed; slowly, because the work is for eternity, and because only gradually can moral and spiritual evils be removed. "It is by no breath, turn of eye, wave of hand, salvation joins issue with death," but by actual and sustained moral conflict, by real sacrifice and persistent choice of good, by long trial and development of individual character, by the slow growth of nations and the interaction of social and religious influences, by the leavening of all that is human with the spirit of Christ, that is, with self-devotement in practical life to the good of men. All this is too great and too real to be other than slow. The tide of moral progress in the world has often seemed to turn. Even now, when the leaven has been working for so long, how doubtful often seems the issue, how concerned even Christian people are about the merest superficialities and how little labouring to put down in Christ's name the common enemies. Can any one who looks at things as they are find it easy to believe in the final extinction of evil? Whither tend the prevalent vices, the empty-souled love of pleasure and demand for excitement, the

unyielding, brazen-faced selfishness of the principles of business if not of the men who engage in it, the diligent propagation of error, the oppression of the rich and the greed and sensuality that poverty induces? One needs to be reminded that these things are the enemies, not only of good men, but of Christ, and that by God's will He is to defeat them. One needs to be reminded also that to see this victory accomplished and to have had no share in it will be the sorest humiliation and the most painful reflection to every generous mind. However slight be our power, let us strike such blow as we can at the common enemies which must be destroyed ere the great consummation is reached.

THE SPIRITUAL BODY.

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."—1 Cor. xv. 35-58.

XXIV.

THE SPIRITUAL BODY.

THE proofs of the Resurrection which Paul has adduced are satisfactory. So long as they are clearly before the mind, we find it possible to believe in that great experience which will finally give us possession of the life to come. But after all proof rises doubt irrepressible, owing to the difficulty of understanding the process through which the body passes and the nature of the body that is to be. "Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" Not always in an unbelieving or scoffing spirit, often in mere perplexity and justifiable inquisitiveness, will men ask these questions.

Paul answers both inquiries by referring to analogies in the natural world. Only by death, he says, does seed reach its designed development; and the body or form in which seed rises is very different in appearance from that in which it is sown. These analogies have their place and their use in removing objections and difficulties. They are not intended or supposed to establish the fact of the Resurrection, but only to remove difficulties as to its mode. By analogy you can show that a certain process or result is not impossible, you may even create a presumption in its favour,

but you cannot establish it as an actuality. Analogy is a powerful instrument for removing objections, but utterly weak for establishing positive truth. Seed lives again after burial, but it does not follow that our bodies will do so. Seed when it rots away beneath the soil gives birth to a better thing than that which was sown, but this is no proof that the same result will follow when our bodies pass through a similar treatment. But if a man says, as Paul here supposes he may, "Such a thing as this resurrection you speak of is an unnatural, unheard-of, and impossible thing," the best reply is to point him to some analogous process in nature, in which this apparent impossibility or something very similar is actually brought to pass.

Even outside the circle of Christian thought these analogies in nature have always been felt to remove some of the presumptions against the Resurrection and to make room for listening to evidence in its favour. The transformation of the seed into the plant and the development of the seed to a fuller life through apparent extinction, the transformation of the grub into the brilliant and powerful dragon-fly through a process which terminates the life of the grub—these and other natural facts show that one life may be continued through various phases, and that the termination of one form of life does not always mean the termination of all life in a creature. We need not, these analogies tell us, at once conclude that death ends all, for in some visible instances death is only a birth to a higher and freer life. Neither need we point to the dissolution of the natural body and conclude that no more perfect body can be connected with such a process, because in many cases we see a more efficient body disengaged from the original and dissolving body. Thus far the

analogies carry us. It is doubtful whether they should be pushed further, although they might seem to indicate that the new body is not to be a new creation, but is to be produced by virtue of what is already in existence. The new body is not to be irrespective of what has gone before, but is to be the natural result of causes already working. What these causes are, or how the spirit is to impress its character on the body, we do not know.

It is not impossible, then, nor even quite improbable, that the death of our present body may set free a new and far more perfectly equipped body. The fact that we cannot conceive the nature of this body need not trouble us. Who without previous observation could imagine what would spring from an acorn or a seed of wheat? To each God gives its own body. We cannot imagine what our future body, subject to no waste or decay, can be; but we need not on that account reject as childish all expectation that such a body shall exist. "All flesh is not the same flesh." The kind of flesh you now wear may be unfit for everlasting life, but there may await you as suitable and congenial a body as your present familiar tenement. Consider the inexhaustible fertility of God, the endless varieties already existing in nature. The bird has a body which fits it for life in the air; the fish lives with comfort in its own element. And the variety already existing does not exhaust God's resources. We read at present but one chapter in the history of life, and what future chapters are to unfold who can imagine? A fertile and inventive man knows no bound to his progress; will God stand still? Are we not but at the beginning of His works? May we not reasonably suppose that a truly infinite expansion and

development await God's works? Is it not entirely unreasonable to suppose that what we see and know is the measure of God's resources?

Paul does not attempt to describe the future body, but contents himself with pointing out one or two of its characteristics by which it is distinguished from the body we now wear. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." In this body there is decay, humiliation, weakness, a life that is merely temporary; in the body that is to be decay gives place to incorruptibility, humiliation to glory, weakness to power, animal life to spiritual.

The present body is subject to decay. Not only is it easily injured by accident and often rendered permanently useless, but it is so constituted that all activity wastes it; and this waste needs constant repair. That we may constantly seek this repair, we are endowed with strong appetites, which sometimes overbear everything else in us and both defeat their own ends and hinder the growth of the spirit. The organs by which the waste is repaired themselves wear out, so that by no care or nourishment can a man make out to live as long as a tree. But the very decay of this body makes way for one in which there shall be no waste, no need of physical nourishment, and therefore no need of strong and overbearing physical appetites. Instead of impeding the spirit by clamouring to have its wants attended to, it will be the spirit's instrument. A great part of the temptations of this present life arise from the conditions in which we necessarily exist as dependent for our comfort in great measure on the

body. And one can scarcely conceive the feeling of emancipation and superiority which will possess those who have no anxiety about a livelihood, no fear of death, no distraction of appetite.

The present body is for similar reasons characterized by "weakness." We cannot be where we would, nor do what we would. A man may work his twelve hours, but he must then acknowledge he has a body which needs rest and sleep. Many persons are disqualified by bodily weakness from certain forms of usefulness and enjoyment. Many persons also, though able to do a certain amount of work, do it with labour; their vitality is habitually low, and they never have the full use of their powers, but need continually to be on their guard, and go through life burdened with a lassitude and discomfort more difficult to bear than passing attacks of pain. In contradistinction to this and to every form of weakness, the resurrection body will be full of power, able to accomplish the behests of the will, and fit for all that is required of it.

But the most comprehensive contrast between the two bodies is expressed in the words, "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." A natural body is that which is animated by a human life and is fitted for this world. "The first man Adam was made a living soul," or, as we should more naturally say, an animal. He was made with a capacity for living; and because he was to live upon earth, he had a body in which this life or soul was lodged. The natural body is the body we receive at birth, and which is suited for its own requirements of maintaining itself in life in this world into which we are born. The soul, or animal life, of man is higher than that of the other animals, it has richer endowments and capacities, but it is also in

many respects similar. Many men are quite content with the merely animal life which this world upholds and furnishes. They find enough to satisfy them in its pleasures, its work, its affairs, its friendships; and for all these the natural body is sufficient. The thoughtful man cannot indeed but look forward and ask himself what is to become of this body. If he turns to Scripture for light, he will probably be struck with the fact that it sheds no light whatever on the future of the natural body. Those who are in Christ enter into possession of a spiritual body, but there is no hint of any more perfect body being prepared for those who are not in Christ.

The spiritual body, which is reserved for spiritual men, is a body in which the upholding life is spiritual. The natural life of man both forms to a human shape and upholds the natural body; the spiritual body is similarly maintained by what is spiritual in man. It is the soul, or natural life, of man which gives the body its appetites and maintains it in efficiency; remove this soul, and the body is mere dead matter. In like manner it is the spirit which maintains the spiritual body; and by the spirit is meant that in man which can delight in God and in goodness. The body we now have is miserable and useless or happy and serviceable in proportion to its animal vitality, in proportion to its power to assimilate to itself the nutriment this physical world supplies. The spiritual body will be healthy or sickly in proportion to the spiritual vitality that animates it; that is to say, in proportion to the power of the individual spirit to delight in God and find its life in Him and in what He lives for.

We have already seen that Paul refuses to consider the resurrection of Christ as miraculous in the sense of

its being unique or abnormal; on the contrary, he considers resurrection to be an essential step in normal human development, and therefore experienced by Christ. And now he enunciates the great principle or law which governs not only this fact of resurrection, but the whole evolution of God's works: "first that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual." It is this law which we see ruling the history of creation and the history of man. The spiritual is the culminating point towards which all the processes of nature tend. The gradual development of what is spiritual, of will, of love, of moral excellence—this, so far as man can see, is the end towards which all nature constantly and steadily is working.

Sometimes, however, it occurs to one to question the law "first that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual." If the present body hinders rather than helps the growth of the spirit, if at last all Christians are to have a spiritual body, why might we not have had this body to begin with? What need of this mysterious process of passing from life to life and from body to body? If it is true that we are here only for a few years and in the future life for ever, why should we be here at all? Why might we not at birth have been ushered into our eternal state? The answer is obvious. We are not at once introduced into our eternal condition because we are moral creatures, free to choose for ourselves, and who cannot enter an eternal state save by choice of our own: first that which is natural, first that which is animal, first a life in which we have abundant opportunity to test what appears good and are free to make our choice; then that which is spiritual, because the spiritual can only be a thing of choice, a thing of the will. There is no

spiritual life or spiritual birth save by the will. Men can become spiritual only by choosing to be so. Involuntary, compulsory, necessitated, natural spirituality is, so far as man is concerned, a contradiction in terms.

Human nature is a thing of immense possibilities and range. On the one side it is akin to the lower animals, to the physical world and all that is in it, high and low; on the other side it is akin to the highest of all spiritual existences, even to God Himself. At present we are in a world admirably adapted for our probation and discipline, a world in which, in point of fact, every man does attach himself to the lower or to the higher, to the present or to the eternal, to the natural or to the spiritual. And although the results of this may not be apparent in average cases, yet in extreme cases the results of human choice are obtrusively apparent. Let a man give himself unrestrainedly and exclusively to animal life in its grosser forms, and the body itself soon begins to suffer. You can see the process of physical deterioration going on, deepening in misery, until death comes. But what follows death? Can one promise himself or another a future body which shall be exempt from the pains which unrepented sin has introduced? Are those who have by their vice committed a slow suicide to be clothed hereafter in an incorruptible and efficient body? It seems wholly contrary to reason to suppose so. And how can their probation be continued if the very circumstance which makes this life so thorough a probation to us all—the circumstance of our being clothed with a body—is absent? The truth is, there is no subject on which more darkness hangs or on which Scripture preserves so ominous a silence as the future

of the body of those who in this life have not chosen God and things spiritual as their life.

On the other hand, if we consider instances in which the spiritual life has been resolutely and unreservedly chosen, we see anticipations here also of the future destiny of those who have so chosen. They may be crushed by diseases as painful and as fatal as the most flagrant of sinners endure, but these diseases frequently have the result only of making the true spiritual life shine more brightly. In extreme cases, you would almost say, the transmutation of the tortured and worn body into a glorified body is begun. The spirit seems dominant; and as you stand by and watch, you begin to feel that death has no relation to the emotions, and hopes, and intercourse you detect in that spirit. These, which seem, and are, the very life of the spirit, cannot be thought of as terminated by a merely physical change. They do not spring from, nor do they depend upon, what is physical; and it is reasonable to suppose that they will not be destroyed by it. Looking at Christ Himself and allowing due impression to be made upon us by His concernment about the highest, and best, and most lasting things, by His recognition of God and harmony with Him, by His living in God, and by His superiority to earthly considerations, we cannot but feel it to be most unlikely that such a spirit should be extinguished by bodily death.

This spiritual body we receive through the intervention of Christ. As from the first man we receive animal life, from the second we receive spiritual life. "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a quickening spirit. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the

image of the heavenly." The image of the first man we have by our natural and physical derivation from him, the image of the second by spiritual derivation; that is to say, by our choosing Christ as our ideal and by our allowing His Spirit to form us. This Spirit is life-giving; this Spirit is indeed God, communicating to us a life which is at once holy and eternal.

The mode of Christ's intervention is more fully described in the words, "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Everywhere Paul teaches that it was sin which brought death upon man; that man would have broken through the law of death which reigns in the physical world had he not by sin brought himself under the power of things physical. And this poisonous fang was pressed in by the Law. The strength of sin is the Law. It is positive disobedience, the preference of known evil to known good, the violation of law whether written in the conscience or in spoken commandments, which gives sin its moral character. The choice of the evil in presence of the good—it is that which constitutes sin.

The words are no doubt susceptible of another meaning. They could be used by one who wished to say that sin is that which makes death painful, which adds terror of future judgment and gloomy forebodings to the natural pain of death. But it must be owned that this is not so much in keeping with Paul's usual way of looking at the connection between death and sin.

Christ's victory over death is thus explained by Godet: "Christ's victory over death has two aspects, the one relating to Himself, the other concerning men.

He first of all conquered *sin* in relation to Himself by denying to it the right of existence in Him, condemning it to non-existence in His flesh, similar though it was to our sinful flesh (Rom. viii. 3); and thereby He disarmed *the Law* so far as it concerned Himself. His life being the Law in living realization, He had it for Him, and not against Him. This twofold personal victory was the foundation of His own resurrection. Thereafter He continued to act that this victory might extend to us. And first He freed us from the burden of condemnation which *the Law* laid on us, and whereby it was ever interposing between us and communion with God. He recognised in our name the right of God over the sinner; He consented to satisfy it to the utmost in His own person. Whoever appropriates this death as undergone in his room and stead and for himself, sees the door of reconciliation to God open before him, as if he had himself expiated all his sins. The separation established by the Law no longer exists; the Law is disarmed. By that very fact *sin* also is vanquished. Reconciled to God, the believer receives Christ's Spirit, who works in him an absolute breach of will with sin and complete devotion to God. The yoke of sin is at an end; the dominion of God is restored in the heart. The two foundations of the reign of death are thus destroyed. Let Christ appear, and this reign will crumble in the dust for ever."

It is then with joy and triumph Paul contemplates death. Naturally we shrink from and fear it. We know it only from one side: only from seeing it in the persons of other men, and not from our own experience. And what we see in others is necessarily only the darker side of death, the cessation of bodily life and of all intercourse with the warm and lively interests of

the world. It is a condition exciting tears, and moaning, and grief in those that remain in life; and though these tears arise chiefly from our own sense of loss, yet insensibly we think of the condition of the dead as a state to be bewailed. We see the sowing in weakness, in dishonour, in corruption, as Paul says; and we do not see the glory, and strength, and incorruption of the spiritual body. The dead may be in bright regions and be living a keener life than ever; but of this we see nothing: and all we do see is sad, depressing, humiliating.

But to "faith's foreseeing eye" the other side of death becomes also apparent. The grave becomes the robing room for life eternal. Stripped of "this muddy vesture of decay," we are there to be clothed with a spiritual body. Death is enlisted in the service of Christ's people; and by destroying flesh and blood, it enables this mortal to put on immortality. The blow which threatens to crush and annihilate all life breaks but the shell and lets the imprisoned spirit free to a larger life. Death is swallowed up in victory, and itself ministers to the final triumph of man. Our instincts tell us that death is critical and has a determining power on our destinies. We cannot evade it; we may depreciate or neglect, but we cannot diminish, its importance. It has its place and its function, and it will operate in each one of us according to what it finds in us, destroying what is merely animal, emancipating what is truly spiritual. We cannot as yet stand on the further side of death, and look back on it, and recognise its kindly work in us; but we can understand Paul's burst of anticipated triumph, and with him we can forecast the joy of having passed all doubtful struggle and anxious foreboding, and of finally experi-

encing that all the evils of humanity have been overcome. With a triumph so complete in view, we can also listen to his exhortation, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

But if we have any fit conception of the magnitude of the triumph, we shall also cherish some worthy idea of the reality of the conflict. Those who have felt the terror of death know that it can be counterbalanced only by something more than a surmise, a hope, a longing, only indeed by a fact as solid as itself. And if to them the resurrection of Christ approves itself as such a fact, and if they can listen to His voice saying, "Because I live, ye shall live also," they do feel themselves armed against the graver terrors of death, and cannot but look forward with some confident hope to a life into which the ills they have here experienced cannot follow them. But at the same time, and in proportion as the reality of the future life quickens hope within them, it must also reveal to them the reality of the conflict through which that life is reached. By no mere idle naming of the name of Christ or resultless faith in Him can men pass from what is natural to what is spiritual. We are summoned to believe in Christ, but for a purpose; and that purpose is that, believing in Him as the revelation of God to us, we may be able to choose Him as our pattern and live His life. It is only what is truly spiritual in ourselves that can put us in possession of a spiritual body. From Christ we can receive what is spiritual; and if our belief in Him prompts us to become like Him, then we may count upon sharing in His destiny.

This is the permanent incentive of the Christian life.

This present experience of ours leads to a larger, more satisfying experience. Beyond our horizon there awaits us an endlessly enlarging world. Death, which seems to bound our view, is really but our real birth to a fuller, and eternal, and true life. "Therefore be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." The promptings of conscience do not delude you; your instinctive hopes will not be put to shame; your faith is reasonable; there is a life beyond. And no effort you now put forth will prove vain; no prayer, no earnest desire, no struggle towards what is spiritual, will fail of its effect. All that is spiritual is destined to live; it belongs to the eternal world: and all that you do in the Spirit, all mastery of self, and the world, and the flesh, all devoted fellowship with God—all is giving you a surer place and a more abundant entrance into the spiritual world, for "your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

THE POOR.

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me. Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries. Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren. As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity. I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth. I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such. The Churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the Church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss. The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen."—1 Cor. xvi.

XXV.

THE POOR.

IN closing his letter to the Corinthians, Paul, as usual, explains his own movements, and adds a number of miscellaneous directions and salutations. These for the most part relate to matters of merely temporary interest, and call for no comment. Interest of a more permanent kind unfortunately attaches to the collection for the poor Christians of Jerusalem which Paul invites the Corinthians to make. Several causes had contributed to this poverty; and, among others, it is not improbable that the persecution promoted by Paul himself had an important place. Many Christians were driven from their homes, and many more must have lost their means of earning a livelihood. But it is likely that Paul was anxious to relieve this poverty, not so much because it had been partly caused by himself as because he saw in it an opportunity for bringing more closely together the two great parties in the Church. In his Epistle to the Galatians Paul tells us that the three leaders of the Jewish Christian Church—James, Peter, and John—when they had assured themselves that this new Apostle was trustworthy, gave him the right hand of fellowship, on the understanding that he should minister to the Gentiles, "only," he adds—"only they would that we should

remember the poor, the same which I also was forward to do." Accordingly we find him seeking to interest the Gentile Churches in their Jewish brethren, and of such importance did he consider the relief that was to be sent to Jerusalem that he himself felt it an honour to be the bearer of it. He saw that no doctrinal explanations were likely to be so fruitful in kindly feeling and true unity as this simple expression of brotherly kindness.

In our own day poverty has assumed a much more serious aspect. It is not the poverty which results from accident, nor even that which results from wrong-doing or indolence, which presses for consideration. Such poverty could easily be met by individual charity or national institutions. But the poverty we are now confronted with is a poverty which necessarily results from the principle of competition which is the main-spring of all trade and business. It is the poverty which results from the constant effort of every man to secure custom by offering a cheaper article, and to secure employment by selling his labour at a cheaper rate than his neighbour. So overstocked is the labour-market that the employer can name his own terms. Where he wants one man, a hundred offer their services; and he who can live most cheaply secures the place. So that necessarily wages are pressed down by competition to the very lowest figure; and wherever any trade is not strong enough to combine and resist this constant pressure, the results are appalling. No slaves were ever so hunger-bitten, no lives were ever more crushed under perpetual and hopeless toil, than are thousands of our fellow-countrymen and countrywomen in our own time. It is the fact that in all our large cities there are thousands of persons who by

working sixteen hours a day earn only what suffices to maintain the most wretched existence. Every day hundreds of children are being born to a life of hopeless toil and misery, unrelieved by any of the comforts or joys of the well-to-do.

The most painful and alarming feature of this condition of things is, as every one knows, that it seems the inevitable result of the principles on which our entire social fabric is built. Every invention, every new method of facilitating business, every contrivance or improvement in machinery, makes life more difficult to the mass of men. The very advances made by civilised nations in the rapid production of needful articles increase the breach between rich and poor, throwing larger resources into the hands of the few, but making the lot of the many still darker and more poverty-stricken. Every year makes the darkness deeper, the distress more urgent. Here individual charity is unavailing. It is not the relief of one here or there that is needed; it is the alteration of a system of things which inevitably produces such results. Individual charity is here a mere mop in the face of the tide. What is wanted is not larger workhouses where the aged poor may be sheltered, but such a system as will enable the working man to provide for himself against old age. What is wanted is not that the charitable should eke out by voluntary contributions the earnings of the labouring classes, but that these earnings should be such as to amply cover all ordinary human wants. "Money given in aid of wages relieves the employer, not the employed; reduces wages, not misery." What is wanted is a social system which tends to bring within the reach of all the comforts and the joys of life which men legitimately desire, and

which does not tend, as our present social system does, to overload a small number of men with more wealth than they need, or desire, or can use, while the millions are crushed with toil and pinched with semi-starvation. What the working classes at present demand is, not charity, but justice. They do not wish to seem to be indebted to others for support which they feel they have toiled for and earned. They require a social system, in which the honest toil of a lifetime shall be sufficient to secure the toiler and his family from the dangers and degradation of utter poverty.

That a change is desirable no one who has spent two thoughts on the subject can doubt. The only question is, What change is desirable and possible? Is there any organization or social system which could check the evils resulting from the present competitive system, and secure that every one who is willing to work should be furnished with remunerative employment? Socialists are quite convinced that the whole problem would be solved were private capital to be converted into co-operative or public capital. Socialism demands that society shall be the only capitalist, and that all private captains of industry and capital be abolished. No return is possible to the state of things in which every man worked by himself with his own hands and at his own risk, producing his one or two webs, tilling his one or two acres. It is recognised that far more and better products can be produced when manufactures are carried on in large factories. But on the socialistic principle these factories must be owned, not by private capitalists, but by the State, or at any rate by co-operative societies of some kind. This is the essence of the demand of Socialism: that "whereas industry is at present carried on by private

capitalists served by wage-labour, it must in the future be conducted by associated or co-operating workmen jointly owning the means of production."

The difficulty in pronouncing judgment on such a demand arises from the fact that very few men indeed have sufficient imagination and sufficient knowledge of our complicated social system to be able to forecast the results of so great a change. In the present stage of human progress personal interest is undoubtedly one of the strongest incentives to industry, and to this motive the present system of competition appeals. And although Socialists declare that their system would not exclude competition, it is difficult to see what field it would have or at what point it would find its opportunity. Certain departments of industry are already in the hands of the State or of co-operative societies, but the organization of all industries and the management and remuneration of all labour demand a machinery so colossal that it is feared it would fall to pieces by its own weight. Still it is possible that ways and means of working a socialistic scheme may be devised; and it is quite certain that if any system could be devised which is really workable, and which should at once save us from the disastrous results of competition and yet evoke all the energy which competition evokes, that system would forthwith be adopted in every civilised country.

As yet, however, no such social system has been elaborated. General principles, ruling ideas, theories, paper plans, have been enunciated by the score; but, in point of fact, there is no system yet devised which appeals either to the common-sense and instincts of the masses, or which stands the criticism of experts. And some of those who have given greatest attention

to social subjects, and have made the greatest personal sacrifices in behalf of the poor and down-trodden, are inclined to believe that no such system can be devised, and that deliverance from the present wretched state of matters is to be found, not in compulsory enactment, nor even in the sudden adoption of a different social system, but in the application of Christian principles to the working of the present competitive system. That is to say, they believe that true progress here, as elsewhere, begins in character, not in outward organization, or, as it has been put, that "the soul of improvement is the improvement of the soul." They consider that the present system rests on unchangeable laws of human nature, but that if men worked that system with consideration, unworldliness, and brotherly kindness, the present evil results would be avoided. Or they believe that it is at any rate useless to alter the present system violently by mere legislative enactment or by revolution, but that if it is to be altered, it can effectually, and permanently, and beneficially be so only under the pressure and at the dictation of an improved public opinion.

Appeal is confidently made to the mind of Christ by both parties, both by those who trust to the enforcement of a socialistic scheme, and by those who believe only in the social improvement which results from the improvement of the individual. By the one party it is confidently affirmed that were Jesus Christ now on earth He would be a communist, would aim at equalizing all classes and at commuting private property into a public fund. Communism has been tried to some extent in the Church. In monastic societies private property is surrendered for the good of the community, and this practice professes to find

its sanction in the communism of the primitive Church. But the account we have of that communism shows that it was neither compulsory nor permanent. It was not compulsory, for Peter reminds Ananias that his property was his own, and that even after he had sold it he was at liberty to do what he pleased with the proceeds. And it was not permanent nor universal, for here we find that Paul had to ask contributions for the relief of the poor Christians of Jerusalem; while we see that there were rich and poor in the same congregations, and that such duties as almsgiving and hospitality, which could not be practised without private means, were enjoined upon Christians. It is also obvious that many of the duties inculcated in the Epistles of Paul could not be discharged in a society in which all classes were levelled.

It is perhaps of more importance to observe that in probably the most critical period of the world's history our Lord took no part in any political movement; nay, He counted it a temptation of the devil when He saw how much inducement there was to head some popular party and compete with kings or statesmen. He was no agitator, although He lived in an age abounding in abuses. And this limitation of His work was due to no superficial view of social movements nor to any mere shrinking from the rougher work of life, but to His perception that His own task was to touch what was deepest in man, and to lodge in human nature forces which ultimately would achieve all that was desirable. The cry of the poor against the oppressor was never louder than in His lifetime; slavery was universal: no country on earth enjoyed a free government. Yet our Lord most carefully abstained from following in the steps of a Judas the

Gaulanite, and from intermeddling with social or State affairs. He came to found a kingdom, and that kingdom was to exist on earth, and was to be the ideal condition of mankind; but He trusted to move and mould society by regenerating the individual and by teaching men to seek in the first place not what "the Gentiles seek"—happy outward conditions—but the kingdom of God, the rule of God's Spirit in the heart, and the righteousness that comes of that. It was by the regeneration of individuals society was to be regenerated. The leaven which contact with Him imparted to the individual would touch and purify the whole social fabric.

In any case the duty of individual Christians is plain. Whether needless and unjust poverty is to be relieved by social revolution or by the happier and surer, if slower, method of leavening society with the spirit of Christ, it is the part of every Christian man to inform himself of the state of his fellow-citizens and to bring himself in some practically helpful way into connection with the wretchedness in the midst of which we are living. To shut our eyes to the squalor, and vice, and hopelessness which poverty too often brings, to seclude ourselves in our own comfortable homes and shut out all sounds and signs of misery, to "abhor the affliction of the afflicted," and practically to deny that it is better to visit the house of mourning than the house of feasting—this is simply to furnish proof that we know nothing of the spirit of Christ. We may find ourselves quite unable to rectify abuses on a large scale or to discern how poverty can be absolutely prevented, but we can do something to brighten some lives; we can consider those whose hard and bare lives make our comforts

cheap; we can ask ourselves whether we are quite free from blood-guiltiness in using articles which are cheap to us because wrung out of underpaid and starving hands. It is true that anything we can do may be but a scratching of the surface, the lifting of a bucketful out of an overflowing flood which should be stopped at the source; still we must do what we can, and all knowledge of social facts and kindly feeling and action towards the oppressed are helpful, and on the way to a final settlement of our social condition. Let every Christian give his conscience fair play, let him ask himself what Christ would do in his circumstances, and this final settlement will not be long postponed. But so long as selfishness rules, so long as the world of men is like a pit full of loathsome creatures, each struggling to the top over the heads and crushed bodies of the rest, no scheme will alter or even disguise our infamy.

The method of collecting which Paul recommends was in all probability that which he himself practised. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." This verse has sometimes been quoted as evidence that the Christians met for worship on Sundays as we do. Manifestly it shows nothing of the kind. It is proof that the first day of the week had a significance, *probably* as the day of our Lord's resurrection, possibly only for some trade reasons now unknown. It is expressly said that each was to lay up "by him"—that is, not in a public fund, but at home in his own purse—what he wished to give. But what is chiefly to be noticed is that Paul, who ordinarily is so free from preciseness and form, here enjoins the precise method in which the collection

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